

“A GIRL’S GAME - AND A GOOD ONE TOO”

A Critical Analysis of New Zealand Netball

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAU	Amateur Athletic Union
AAWBBA	All Australia Women's Basket Ball Association
CBA	Canterbury Basketball Association
CNU	Canterbury Netball Union
FIBA	Federation Internationale de Basket Ball
IFNA	International Federation of Netball Associations
IOC	International Olympic Committee
NBA	National Basketball Association
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
NNZ	Netball New Zealand
NZBA	New Zealand Basketball Association
NZBRA	New Zealand Basketball Referee's Association
NZMNA	New Zealand Men's Netball Association
NZRFU	New Zealand Rugby Football Union
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analysis of the role of netball in New Zealand society. It examines the question of whether netball was able to achieve hegemony over women's sports in New Zealand by confronting male domination of sport and society, or by accepting such domination and adapting itself accordingly. There is also an examination of the reasons why netball's sibling, basketball, proved to be less successful in New Zealand than netball.

The first chapter is a narrative of the development of netball, both internationally and in New Zealand. The second is an analysis of how and why participation in netball has changed through time. The third chapter examines the basis for netball's hegemony among women's sports in New Zealand. The last chapter examines further reasons for netball's hegemony and how the basis of this hegemony has changed and been eroded.

INTRODUCTION

“A girls’ game - and a very good one too” stated governor-general Lord Bledisloe as he opened the eighth New Zealand netball tournament in Dunedin in 1934.¹ The sport of netball has been considered the domain of women since the beginning of its history in New Zealand. Netball is the major team sport of New Zealand sportswomen. It is unique in that it is one of the few sports world-wide that is almost exclusively dominated by women. The sport of netball in New Zealand has, therefore, had a tremendous impact on the overall sporting culture of this country. This is particularly true in respect to the role of women in New Zealand sports.

Sport in New Zealand is overwhelmingly dominated by males. Male sports organisations receive the bulk of media exposure as well as the majority of corporate sponsorship and state funding. However, women have managed to carve an ever expanding niche in this male dominated arena. This is particularly so since the 1970s when the gender division of sports has been continually eroded. Despite the advances made by women, however, males still control the majority of sports organisations. Of all the members of New Zealand sporting organisations, 69% are men. 79% of paid sports executives are men. 80% of the volunteer administrators of New Zealand sports are men, and 89% of ‘elected’

national directors of sports organisations are men.² Sport has traditionally been viewed as a male preserve, not just in New Zealand, but throughout much of the world.

This thesis is an analysis of the dominance of netball amongst New Zealand's women in order to examine the peculiar nature of gender divisions in New Zealand sport. New Zealand is peculiar in the respect that, although women have traditionally been confined to the margins of sport, there is one glaring exception. The one sport that women have made their own is the game of netball. Netball is undoubtedly the dominant team sport for women in New Zealand. 27% of the total number of women who are members of sporting organisations in New Zealand belong to Netball New Zealand (NNZ) - the national governing body for netball.³ The corresponding figure for men in Rugby is 28%.⁴ If rugby claims it is the national sport for men in New Zealand then netball certainly has equal justification, on the base of these figures, as the national sport for women.

The participation figure for netball is far in excess of any other women's sport in New Zealand. Furthermore, netball is the only sport that is almost exclusively played by women. Of the total number of netball participants in New Zealand, approximately 99% are women.⁵ Netball receives state funding only marginally behind that of New Zealand Golf (mixed gender) and the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (male dominated).⁶ NNZ has also managed to consistently secure corporate sponsorship far in excess of that for any other women's sports organisation (NNZ's sponsorship income for 1994 was \$736,014).⁷ Elite level netball players have a far higher media profile than most other New Zealand sportswomen. Indeed, netball is the only women's sport that Television New

Zealand pays for the rights to screen matches. The claim that netball is “second only to Rugby in the realm of New Zealand sport” is appropriate in light of this evidence.⁸ Netball, like rugby, has managed to achieve a position of hegemony in New Zealand women’s sports.

It is estimated that upwards of 118,760 women were active in netball in 1995.⁹ This is the largest number of women actively engaged in a single sport, and yet still only a small proportion of all women in New Zealand. Yet, like rugby, netball is often used to define gender sporting roles in New Zealand. For example, the stereotypical “kiwi bloke” played rugby while the “kiwi woman” played netball, if she played sport at all. In this respect, sport in New Zealand has reflected New Zealand society in terms of its rigid gender stratification. The sports played in New Zealand are, in effect, products of the unique social and cultural heritage of this country. What is it that enabled netball to gain, and hold, an effective hegemony over women’s sports in New Zealand?

The central theme of this thesis is an attempt to determine whether or not netball’s hegemony was the end result of a successful campaign to undermine the prevailing patriarchal dominance of New Zealand sport and society, or was netball’s hegemony a product of this patriarchal sporting dominance. The traditional view of netball’s success is that the game was able to provide, in effect, an island of female-centred sporting culture in the sea of masculinity that characterised New Zealand sports. This thesis deconstructs this conventional approach in order to reassemble a more accurate interpretation of netball as an inevitable product of patriarchal dominance of New Zealand sport. Male dominance of sport has not been complete. Patriarchal society could not stop

women from playing sport in New Zealand. However, this dominance was sufficient to dictate what sport women played and when and how they would play it.

Sport was rigidly gender segregated until recently. This state of affairs had existed since the emergence of modern style sports in nineteenth century Britain. Pressure was exerted upon prospective participants in all sports to conform to gender specific activities. For example, men have been encouraged to play 'manly' sports such as the various codes of football. Conversely, women have been, until recent decades, limited to sports conforming to social expectations of 'femininity', such as netball. It is for this reason that the sports arenas of the world provide one of the most visible displays of gender inequality.[#] This gender stratification was the essential component of the patriarchal dominance of sport. Male organisations were able to control the majority of resources by confining women's organisations to the margins. Until recently, netball has struggled for resources in comparison with many male sports organisations. This is despite the fact that it was the highest profile sport for New Zealand women.

In order to examine New Zealand netball it is first necessary to provide an accurate narrative of the history of the game in New Zealand and its wider international context. The first chapter is devoted solely to this undertaking. Modern New Zealand netball is a derivative of the game of basketball invented by

[#] In this thesis 'Modern style sports' can be defined as organised and codified games played within a national structure with generally agreed upon boundaries in terms of both geography and time. Furthermore, the distinction between men's and women's sports has become blurred with the erosion of sporting gender boundaries. The term women's sports refers to those sports that have traditionally been dominated by women. This includes sports like netball, but also sports like golf that has had an autonomous women's administrative body.

Dr James Naismith at Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1891. However, as modern netball was known as basketball before 1970 it is very easy to get confused by the naming of the various games. To further complicate matters, there was a game called netball played in New Zealand until 1956. It is a mistake to treat modern netball as a continuation of this earlier netball as this is not the case. Therefore the question of titles plagues the discussion of the various games. In order to prevent any unnecessary confusion it is important to clearly define the terminology used when discussing the various games.

The game that Naismith invented, and has become modern basketball, shall henceforth be referred to as 'basketball'. The version developed around the same time for women, and known in New Zealand also as 'basketball', has subsequently developed into the game of netball. The name was only changed from basketball to netball in 1970 in order that the New Zealand and Australian associations would fall into line with the international ruling body, the International Federation of Netball Associations (IFNA). For ease of understanding, this developing game shall simply be called netball throughout this thesis even though this will appear to be anachronistic.

The game played in some secondary schools until 1956, also known as netball, presents a difficult problem in order to name it without confusion. The two games did have one obvious difference. The game adopted by NNZ had nine players per side while the game adopted in many New Zealand schools and originating in England had only seven players per team. When discussing the two games together they shall be referred to as either nine-a-side or seven-a-side netball. The term netball shall be used to label the women's versions of

Naismith's original game throughout, unless the context of the discussion demands otherwise.

Allied to the problem of the titles of the various games is that of the titles of the netball associations, both local and national. The New Zealand national association that was formed in 1924 was named the New Zealand Basketball Association (NZBA). This organisation has subsequently undergone several name changes. For example, in 1970 the NZBA became the New Zealand Netball Association Inc., which in October 1990 became Netball New Zealand Inc. As these names all refer to the same association, the name Netball New Zealand (NNZ) shall be used throughout this thesis. Similarly, the Canterbury association was formed in 1921 as the Christchurch Basketball Association. This association is now the Canterbury Netball Union (CNU) and this is the name by which it shall be referred throughout this thesis. This is in order to avoid possible confusion and for ease of reference as this thesis is an analysis of netball and not a chronological narrative. The development of netball in Canterbury is used extensively throughout this thesis to illustrate points relating to provincial netball in New Zealand. It is assumed that the case of Canterbury is reasonably representative of the provincial development of netball. Canterbury is used because I have had access to good primary source material from this association.

Historiography

The study of sports history is a fairly new discipline world-wide. Sports are no longer treated as if they exist in isolation from the realms of politics, economics and human societies. There is now a realisation that there is much

work to be done on the role sports have played in shaping contemporary societies.

It is only in the last twenty years that we have seen the emergence of sports history, a field which attempts to examine the roles and structures of various societies by examining the way people play within them. Far from merely documenting what has happened in various sports, or countries, these works seek to interpret the social factors that have influenced the way we play in general.

However, until recently, much of the new sports history has been largely concentrated on the examination of male sports with analysis of the role of women in sport remaining on the margins, in common with women sports participants. Recent works by Alan Guttmann, Kathleen McCrone, Jennifer Hargreaves, and a host of other feminist historians have begun to redress this balance somewhat.¹⁰ There are also a number of sports history journals published world-wide. Two that have been of particular use in this thesis are The International Journal of the History of Sport and Sporting Traditions.¹¹ Both of these journals have recently devoted editions to women's sports history.

Exponents of women's sports history tend to have a different focus for their analyses than their counterparts studying male sports. The main focus of male sports history has been on how the nature of sports has altered society. Conversely, the few historians to look at women's sports have done so from a perspective which tends to focus on gender stratification and how social attitudes have constrained women's sporting and recreational opportunities. The key to the question of gender in sports history is to first examine the differing concepts of what is considered masculine and feminine in any given society. The initial thrust of enquiry into women's sports history follows exactly this line. However, while

this provides an extremely useful basis for an examination of sports in general, there have so far been few attempts to thoroughly examine the development of a specific sport.

New Zealand sports history lags well behind the rest of the world in terms of both quality and quantity. New Zealand lacks an organised school of sports historians, such as the Australian Society for Sports History, and unfortunately the academic institutions have been unable to devote sufficient resources to building a body of work on New Zealand sports history. This is ironic when the New Zealand obsession with sport is taken into consideration.

There is very little analysis of the role of women in New Zealand sports as a consequence of the lack of academic sports history. Sports writing in New Zealand is largely confined to biography of New Zealand sports stars, or to journalistic articles examining the current hot topic in sports. Little attempt has been made to examine the history of sport in New Zealand, or more importantly, the influence of sport as a whole on New Zealand society. What writing there is available is generally of little intellectual interest. When sports writers in New Zealand attempt to examine this country's rich sporting heritage they tend to deliver narrative history. While narrative history is valuable, it cannot offer much insight into the social and cultural heritage of sport in New Zealand.

This problem is particularly acute in the realm of women's sports. There has not been a serious attempt to examine the role of women's sports in contemporary New Zealand society. Even though netball is undoubtedly the dominant sport for women in New Zealand there is a notable dearth of literature about the game. The extent of published material relating to netball tends to

amount to a collection of glossy, magazine-style, 'what happened' publications, or coaching manuals from New Zealand international coaches and players. For example, Marian Smith and Brian Humberstone's Netball: the greatest team sport for women gives only a limited description of the history and development of netball in New Zealand before devoting itself to coaching tips.¹²

Netball does receive some analysis in two excellent works published to mark the centenary of the introduction of women's suffrage. Charlotte Macdonald contributed a valuable, semi-narrative, semi-analytical, article on NNZ in Women Together: A History of Women's Organisations in New Zealand, Nga Ropu Wahine o te Motu.¹³ Furthermore, the role of women in New Zealand sports receives a good chapter from various authors in Standing In The Sunshine: A History Of New Zealand Women Since They Won The Vote.¹⁴ These two works provide a very valuable background for much of the research and analysis of this thesis. However, they do not attempt to tackle any of the real substantive issues on the role of New Zealand women in sport.

The only attempt at a history of New Zealand netball so far has been E. M. Lane's Basketball in New Zealand: A Brief History, 1906-1967.¹⁵ This is little more than a narrative history and a very limited and defective one at that. The one serious attempt at an intellectual study of aspects of netball in New Zealand is John Nauright and Jayne Broomhall's article A Woman's Game: The Development of Netball and a Female Sporting Culture in New Zealand, 1906-70.¹⁶ The article touches on some of the reasons why netball has become the major sport for women in New Zealand. However, due to the necessarily short nature of journal articles it is not able to go into anything like the detail that this

subject demands. The authors draw no distinction between the nine-a-side and seven-a-side versions of netball that coexisted in New Zealand until 1959. Modern netball is a hybrid of these two games, a fact which is ignored by the authors. Furthermore, Nauright and Broomhall offer a misleading interpretation of the origins and development of netball in New Zealand. The third chapter of this thesis contains a deconstruction of Nauright and Broomhall's argument over the development of netball in New Zealand.

The history of international netball has scarcely been more fulsomely treated than the New Zealand game. Netball does receive a mention in volumes of high quality women's sports history by McCrone and Hargreaves.¹⁷ However, these references to netball tend to add colour to general arguments on the role of women in sports and, consequently, add little to the examination of the specific case of netball. In 1991, Ian Jobling and Pam Barham published a narrative article on the development of the All Australia Women's Basketball Association which provides a useful comparative reference for the examination of the game in New Zealand.¹⁸ One would expect to find many similarities between New Zealand and Australian netball as Australia is New Zealand's closest neighbour and there is a long history of trans-Tasman sporting contact. However, we await an in-depth analysis of the reasons for netball's popularity in Australia.

This thesis, therefore, fills this gap in the knowledge of New Zealand women's sports history. It is not intended to provide a definitive narrative of the game but to explore the imperatives behind netball's developing hegemony over New Zealand women's sports. This hegemony was achieved at a remarkably early stage of the game's development in this country and at the expense of sports, like

hockey and tennis, that had been established in New Zealand well before netball. Furthermore, NNZ has successfully maintained this hegemony despite the erosion of the original basis for its achievement.

There are four chapters. The first, a narrative of the development of New Zealand netball, provides the context for the following analytical chapters. The second chapter provides an analysis of participation patterns in netball and how they have changed over time. The last two chapters discuss netball's hegemony and NNZ's approach to the maintenance of this hegemony.

Chapter One

This chapter traces the development of netball since its invention by Naismith in 1891 through its introduction into, and dissemination throughout, New Zealand and then its subsequent development up to 1996. It also deals with the parallel development of basketball in New Zealand and its international context. This is an essential component of the answer to the question of why netball was able to gain hegemony over New Zealand women's sports. A secondary theme of this thesis is the examination of the question of why basketball has never gained the stature of netball in New Zealand. This question must be addressed as netball and basketball are both derivatives of Naismith's original game and yet only netball has gained status as a major sport in New Zealand. A comparison of the development of the two games in New Zealand provides valuable clues to the answer of this question.

Basketball in New Zealand was forced to compete with well established sports, like rugby, for male participants. Furthermore, in an interesting reversal of

its American image, throughout the British Empire, basketball was considered a rather effeminate sport. By contrast, the women's version of Naismith's game was promoted as being particularly suitable for women. The issue of femininity would prove to be a key to respective developments of the offshoots of Naismith's game throughout the British Empire.

Chapter Two

This chapter is an analysis of how the demographic of participation in New Zealand netball has altered over time. Participation in Netball was effectively limited to schoolgirls and their instructors during the period immediately after its introduction into New Zealand. As many of these first players left their respective schools, during the first twenty years of this century, they began to form the first netball clubs and associations in order to continue playing the game. The game was also gradually spread throughout the majority of New Zealand's schools during this period.

Once the game had developed through schools and NNZ had been launched, the participation demographic of netball would remain remarkably static until the 1970s. New Zealand society had defined a women's primary role as that of mother and homemaker, a situation in common with much of the rest of the world. Consequently, there was a tendency for women to subordinate their recreational independence in favour of familial duties. From netball's perspective this meant that the vast majority of its members gave up playing the game upon marriage. If they ever returned to netball it would be in an administrative or officiating role.

The gradual loosening of social expectations of the role of women since the late 1960s has also seen a corresponding expansion in the participation demographic of netball. The average netball player now begins playing at a much younger age than was previously possible and can continue well past marriage. NNZ has positioned itself well to take advantage of this social change and has subsequently reaped the rewards of increased membership and a far healthier bank balance.

This chapter also examines the role of maori in netball and the increasing proportion of Polynesian women involved in the game. An examination of the competition from indoor netball as well as the involvement of men in modern netball completes the analysis of the changing participation demographic of New Zealand netball.

Chapter Three

This chapter examines the issue of how the social construction of femininity has influenced netball. The construction of femininity and its associated gender stratification has had a profound effect upon women's sport in global terms. The elaboration of masculine and feminine roles in the wider society has been carried over into sport. Owing to its being perceived as a feminine sport, New Zealand netball has interestingly reaped the benefits of this stratification at the expense of less 'feminine' sports. Other sports, such as hockey, have not had the same appeal in New Zealand due to the perception that they were too 'masculine'. This chapter analyses how netball has, ironically, used the prevailing gender stratification of New Zealand society in order to build its hegemony.

Prior to arguing that netball was the benefactor of patriarchal control over New Zealand's sporting arena it is first necessary to confront Nauright and Broomhall's argument that netball was a female centred culture where women exerted power and control free of male interference.¹⁹ Netball administrators have always been constrained in their control of the game by the need to make netball socially acceptable for New Zealand women. A succession of netball administrators realised that by making the game conform to social expectations they would be able to attract a far greater number of participants than would otherwise be possible. This willingness to adapt to prevailing social conditions was a key foundation of netball's sporting hegemony. Netball's competition among women's sports, like hockey, for this hegemony simply could not adapt and conform to the same extent and therefore were left behind by netball.

Nauright and Broomhall were partially correct in that netball was able to develop a female centred culture. However, this culture was by no means free of male control. Patriarchal attitudes were responsible for the game of netball itself. Without the pervasive influence of socially constructed gender stratification the people who altered Naismith's game to develop netball would have felt no need to take such action. Nauright and Broomhall's female centred culture is actually itself a product of patriarchal power and influence.

Chapter Four

This chapter continues the examination of the basis of netball's hegemony. A key aspect of the sporting gender stratification in New Zealand was the large disparity of space available to women's sporting organisations. 'Women only'

recreational space was but a fraction of the relatively large amount of space devoted to the pursuit of recreation for men. This meant that in order to gain its hegemony netball needed to be an efficient user of space. This chapter analyses how netball was developed to use its limited resources more efficiently than other women's sports.

Netball owes the establishment of its hegemony to the fact that it was able to conform to social expectations and it was a far more efficient sport than any of the competition. However, this gendered basis for netball's hegemony has gradually been eroded by the relaxation of sex role stereotyping and an associated increase in the number of recreational activities now available to New Zealand women. Netball is still easily the dominant sport for New Zealand women, despite the erosion of the original basis of netball's hegemony.

The second half of the chapter examines how netball has maintained of its hegemony. NNZ has utilised its high profile and marketability to attract unprecedented levels of sponsorship to be used for funding programmes aimed at preventing the erosion of its existing player base and to attract more players. Furthermore, this section of the chapter examines the influence of this increased exposure and revenue on the shape of the game itself.

NNZ should, therefore, be viewed much like a conservative, albeit efficient, business seeking to protect its market share from the encroachment of its competitors. Throughout its history netball has been able to alter its shape and structure in order to adapt to change. This thesis is an analysis of netball's role in

adapting to, and even to an extent shaping, its external surroundings in order to achieve hegemony over women's sports in New Zealand. The stated goal of the IFNA is, after all, to be the number one sport for women world-wide.

¹ Extract from an unsourced newspaper report of Lord Bledisloes's speech, NNZ Archives.

² J. Cameron, Gender in New Zealand Sport: A Survey of Sport and its National Administration, Sociology Dept, University of Canterbury, November 1992, p.4.

³ Ibid, p.4.

⁴ Ibid, p. 4.

⁵ Ibid, p. 4.

⁶ Making Sport Happen: Track Record 1995/96, Summary of the Hillary Commission's annual report to Parliament.

⁷ NNZ Annual Report, 1994.

⁸ Auckland Star, Saturday, September 18, 1948, p.6.

⁹ This figure is derived from the membership statistics of NNZ for 1995.

¹⁰ A. Guttmann, Women's Sports: A History, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991.

K. McCrone, Sport and the physical Emancipation of Women 1870-1914, Routledge, London, 1988

J. Hargreaves, Sporting Females: Critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sports, Routledge, London, 1994.

¹¹ Sporting Traditions: Journal of the Australian Society for Sports History, Sydney.

The International Journal of the History of Sport, Frank Cass, London.

¹² M. Smith & B. Humberstone, Netball: the greatest team sport for women, Cassell New Zealand, Auckland, 1978.

¹³ C. Macdonald, Netball New Zealand, 1924-, in, Else, A. ed., Women Together: A History of Women's Organisations in New Zealand, Nga Ropu Wahine o te Motu, Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, Daphne Brassell and Associates Press, Wellington, 1994, pp. 431-433.

¹⁴ S. Coney, ed., Standing In The Sunshine: A History Of New Zealand Women Since They Won The Vote, Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, Auckland, 1993.

¹⁵ E. M. Lane Basketball in New Zealand: A Brief History, 1906-1967, NZBA Inc., Christchurch, 1968.

¹⁶ J. Nauright & J. Broomhall, A Woman's Game: The Development of Netball and a Female Sporting Culture in New Zealand, 1906-70, in The International Journal of the History of Sport, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Dec 1994), pp. 387-407.

¹⁷ McCrone, pp. 37, 66-7, 70, 107, 148. Hargreaves, pp. 102, 121, 124, 235, 250-5.

¹⁸ I. Jobling, & P. Barham, The Development of Netball and the All-Australia Women's Basketball Association (AAWBBA): 1891-1939, in Sporting Traditions, November 1991, Sydney, pp. 29-48.

¹⁹ Nauright and Broomhall, p. 389.

Chapter One

Netball: From Springfield to Auckland

This chapter documents the development of netball from its origins in America and its introduction, and dissemination, throughout New Zealand. Such a narrative is necessary for any understanding of why netball became the dominant game for women in New Zealand. This is particularly true when the lack of material about early netball in New Zealand, and therefore the inevitable misconceptions about the games' past, are taken into consideration. This chapter is intended to provide a solid narrative foundation upon which the arguments in the following chapters are based.

In netball's early period in New Zealand the game developed in relative isolation from the rest of the world. Consequently, prior to the formulation of international rules for netball, the New Zealand game was markedly different from that played elsewhere. However, the desire to have international competition prompted radical changes to New Zealand netball. Modern New Zealand netball contains variations from Australia, England and from within New Zealand itself. Therefore, the modern game is a hybrid of several different versions of the original game of indoor basketball invented in America.

Early New Zealand netball varied from region to region because netball did not form a national association in New Zealand until 1924, some thirty three years

after the original game was invented and at least twenty-five after the earliest arrival of the game into New Zealand. The game developed separately in much of the country during this interval which accounts for the diffusion of playing styles and rules throughout New Zealand prior to the formation of a national association in 1924. The first initiative for a national association in New Zealand came from Auckland in September 1922. A meeting was held in Christchurch with all current local associations represented. No national association was to result from this meeting however.¹ The issue of a national association was raised again by the Wellington association in 1924. A meeting was held in Wellington with delegates from Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch in attendance. The Otago association sent an apology and a suggested constitution. As a result of this meeting the New Zealand Basketball Association (henceforth Netball New Zealand, or NNZ) was formed in 1924.² Finally it was accepted that netball in New Zealand would be played under a common set of rules (those of the Otago association) with the adoption of the constitution of NNZ in July 1924.³

However, the formation of a national netball association in New Zealand came thirty-three years after the invention of the forerunner of netball and basketball. This intervening period accounts for the variation of rules encountered in the different New Zealand provinces. Both netball and basketball are undoubtedly derivatives of the same game even though they have subsequently developed along separate paths. An examination of the development of netball's origins in tandem with those of basketball will allow the female dominated world of modern netball to be placed in the appropriate context in contrast to the male dominated world of international basketball.

Basketball was invented by Doctor James Naismith at Springfield, Massachusetts, in the United States in 1891. Naismith was a staff member of the international training seminary for the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) at Springfield. This institute was responsible for training future administrators for the individual YMCAs spread throughout the western world. These men were, in effect, the shock troops of the 'muscular Christian' movement. This movement emphasised the belief that the best way to worship god was in a healthy body. The YMCA movement used their resources to promote clean living and healthy exercise for young working men in order to preach their evangelical message. The YMCA was a prime instigator of the physical education and health education movements throughout much of the western world. Therefore, appropriate physical training was a priority at the Springfield seminary.

Naismith volunteered to take over a particularly rowdy physical education class in the seminary's gymnasium. As physical education classes were compulsory, many of the less physically inclined students were uncooperative and disruptive when it came to physical education classes. Naismith had inherited just such a class. Although outdoor games were popular among many students, the rigid indoor exercise programme met with far less enthusiasm. The problem, as Naismith saw it, was how to keep the class interested in exercise during the long winter months between the end of the football season and the beginning of the baseball season in spring. The particularly harsh winters experienced along the Eastern seaboard of the United States effectively prevented outdoor exercise during this period. The only options for indoor exercise were gymnastics and callisthenics. These exercises proved to be particularly unpopular with Naismith's class.⁴

Naismith needed to devise a way to keep the class occupied with an interesting activity that could be played indoors safely. Naismith made several unsuccessful attempts at adapting outdoor games for indoor play. In order to approach the problem in a more scientific manner Naismith came up with seven criteria for the formation of a suitable game:

- (1) It must be interesting
- (2) It must be easily learnt
- (3) It should be played indoors
- (4) It should be as free of roughness as possible
- (5) It should accommodate large or small groups of men
- (6) It should give an all-round development
- (7) It should be scientific enough to interest older players⁵

Naismith eventually formulated a set of rules for a game to be played with a soccer ball. These rules form the basis for both modern basketball and netball. They were:

1. The ball may be thrown in a direction with one or both hands.
2. The ball may be batted in a direction with one or both hands (never with the fist)
3. A player cannot run with the ball. The player must throw it from the spot on which he catches it; allowance to be made for a man who catches the ball when running at a good speed.
4. The ball must be held in or between the hands; the arms or body must not be used for holding it.
5. No shouldering, holding, pushing, tripping, or striking, in any way the person of an opponent shall be allowed; the first infringement of this rule shall count as a foul, the second shall disqualify him until the next goal is made, or, if there was evident intent to injure the person, for the whole game, no substitute allowed.
6. A foul is striking at the ball with the fist, violation of rules 3, 4, and such as described in 5.
7. If either side makes three consecutive fouls, it shall count as a goal for the opponents. (Consecutive means without the opponents in the meantime making a foul.)
8. A goal shall be made when the ball is batted from the grounds into the basket and stays there, providing those defending the goal do not touch or disturb the goal. If the ball rests on the edge and the opponent moves the basket, it shall count as a goal.
9. When the ball goes out of bounds, it shall be thrown into the field and played by the first person touching it. In the case of a dispute, the umpire shall throw it straight into the field. The thrower-in is allowed five seconds. If he holds it

- longer, it shall go to the opponent. If any side persists in delaying the game, the umpire shall call a foul on them.
10. The umpire shall be the judge of the men and shall note the fouls and notify the referee when three consecutive fouls have been made. He shall have the power to disqualify men according to rule 5.
 11. The referee shall be the judge of the ball and decide when the ball is in play, in bounds, to which side it belongs, and shall keep time. He shall decide when a goal has been made, and keep account of the goals with any other duties that are usually performed by a referee.
 12. The time shall be two fifteen minute halves, with five minutes rest between.
 13. The side making the most goals in that time shall be declared the winner. In the case of a draw, the game may, by agreement of the captains, be continued until another goal is made.¹⁶

This was the original game of, as one of Naismith's students termed it, 'basket ball'. The name officially remained as two words until 1921.⁷ Basketball is unique in that it is probably the only game to have been codified before anyone had actually ever played it. It was a game designed specifically and scientifically to cater to a perceived need. In this respect it was an ideal game to adapt in line with contemporary perceptions of women's role in sport. It could easily be tailored to suit different participants and different playing conditions precisely because it lacked the developmental history of most other games. As the game was new, the rules could be easily changed without protest from participants eager to maintain their own playing traditions. As we shall see, this is precisely what happened in the case of netball.

To the modern observer, Naismith's original basketball would appear to be closer to a more physical version of modern netball than the game of modern basketball. The original rules of basketball have been gradually, although constantly, altered since 1891. The first teams in Naismith's new game consisted of nine players per side. This was due solely to the fact that there were eighteen students in Naismith's physical education class. Naismith never really had any

concern with the number of players on a team as long as they were equal. It was only as regular basketball competitions evolved that there was a need to standardise the number of players per team. Consequently, player numbers were standardised at five per side in 1897.⁸ A rule allowing an additional two players as substitutes was introduced in 1932.⁹ This was increased to the standard five substitutes per team in 1936.¹⁰ Interestingly, the rules defining the dribbling of the ball by the player in possession of it were only introduced into basketball in 1896.¹¹ Therefore, there was a period of five years during which there was no dribbling of the ball in basketball. It was during this time that the initial game for women was developed.

Basketball rapidly gained in popularity because it was the first team game designed specifically for indoor play. Keith Myerscough attributes this rapid growth to several key factors

The conditions necessary for the game's growth were all in place: athletes were tired of the emphasis upon gymnastics and callisthenics during the winter months; the YMCA movement brought athletes together for a single purpose; the establishment's communication system ensured ease of dissemination of information; most branches of the YMCA had gymnasiums; and finally, the game was being taught by people who had not only played basketball, but who had seen it played by the best exponents of the game at that time.¹²

Basketball was initially administered under the auspices of the YMCA. However, the YMCA organisation became concerned that the popularity of the new game was damaging the promotion of other activities and began to discourage basketball in American YMCA's. Much of this concern was over a fundamental ideological conflict between advocates of the new game and administrators of the YMCA. This conflict was over the vexed issue of professionalism versus amateurism. Basketball very rapidly began to attract paying spectators. In 1893 a five team league at Hartford, Connecticut, attracted over 10,000 spectators and made a \$250 profit.¹³

Inevitably money and gate takings became important to teams and the playing spirit began to deteriorate, in the view of the YMCA.

On opposing sides of the dispute were the beginnings of professionalism in basketball (the first fully professional game was played in 1896 in Trenton, New Jersey, with each player receiving approximately a \$15 share of the gate money¹⁴) and the opposition to this viewpoint represented by the YMCA, the ultimate organisation of 'Muscular Christians' and staunch defenders of the inherited amateur games ethos. The YMCA saw the easiest way to solve this dilemma was to withdraw from administration of a game that had realistically outgrown a YMCA movement whose priorities lay elsewhere. Naismith continued to control the rules of basketball until the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) was asked by interested parties to take over control of all aspects of basketball in the United States in 1896 in an effort to keep basketball an amateur game.¹⁵

Basketball was firmly headed along the professional route despite the efforts to keep it an amateur sport. The AAU simply could not exercise enough influence over the new sport to circumvent the desires of players to make money out of the public enthusiasm for the game. A series of professional and semi-professional leagues emerged, and ultimately disappeared, in the first forty-five years of this century. It was not until 1946 that the current American professional basketball league was established. The National Basketball Association (NBA) is the pre-eminent basketball competition. This competition owed its initial success to the recruitment of highly talented players emerging from the strictly amateur collegiate leagues in the US. These leagues are administered by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the successor to the AAU. Previous leagues were

composed of teams from localities rather than an assemblage of the best available talent regardless of origin as would become the norm since the formation of the NBA.

In its early period, basketball became especially popular in the inner cities and urban slums of the East Coast of the United States. During the inter-war years vast numbers of teams formed by recent immigrants and ethnic groups competed in inner city competitions. Famous names such as the “Hebrews” and “Celtics” were formed from the obvious ethnic groups associated with the names. However, the earliest professional teams were exclusively white. The rise of the Afro-American basketball legend only began in earnest after the second world war. The dominance by Afro-Americans in contemporary American basketball is due in no small part to their population of the inner city slums vacated by European immigrants. The crowded inner cities make basketball one of the few practical sports able to be played on the streets. All one needs for a game is a hoop, a ball, and any number of colleagues. The ability to be played in confined spaces has served as an enormous growth imperative for basketball. The popularity of basketball among the inner-city populations of the USA has interesting parallels with the development of netball in New Zealand which will be examined in earnest in **Chapter Four**.

The development of basketball internationally proceeded at a much slower pace than its development in the USA. It was not until the formation of the *Federation Internationale de Basket-Ball* (FIBA) in 1932 that basketball became a truly international sport. The initial meeting of FIBA decided to adopt the then current American rules. There was also the proviso to revise the rules every four years at the time of the Olympic Games.¹⁶ Today, all international competition

remains under the jurisdiction of FIBA. However, the two most prominent basketball leagues, the NCAA college league, and the professional NBA, have their own rules. These rules often contain only minor variations from FIBA rules and FIBA eventually introduce variations inaugurated by the NBA. One such example is the three point rule which was introduced by the NBA in 1980 but only adopted by FIBA in 1985. However, when players or teams from either of these competitions play international basketball they do so under FIBA jurisdiction and therefore FIBA rules.

As basketball has always been strongest in the USA it is not surprising that this country has traditionally taken the initiative in altering playing rules. Furthermore, the early appearance of professionalism, albeit on a minor scale in comparison to the modern NBA, meant that there was an imperative to alter the game to make it more entertaining for paying spectators. The introduction of professional 'barnstorming' basketball teams as early as 1896 (teams that travelled throughout the United States and played games before paying spectators, such as the world famous Harlem Globetrotters) prompted the introduction of several rules that became the cornerstones of modern basketball.

The backboards behind the goals were introduced to prevent home team supporters from deflecting the opposition's shots at goal with broomsticks.¹⁷ The three second and ten second rules were introduced in 1935 in an effort to speed up play and provide more scoring action for spectators.¹⁸ The three second rule involved the marking out of a 'keyhole' under each basket and limiting the time spent by any offensive player within that area to three seconds, when their team was in possession of the ball, before having to leave the keyhole. This rule was designed

to prevent offensive players from staying under the basket and waiting for lob passes or rebounds in order to score from within close range. The ten second rule involved the marking of a half-way line and permitting only ten seconds for the team in possession of the ball to advance it from their defensive half to their offensive half. Once a team had advanced the ball across the half they could not re-cross the halfway line with the ball in their possession. This rule was also adopted for the purpose of speeding up play.

These rules were initially introduced only into American competitions. FIBA, however, later adopted them for international play. The ten second rule was adopted by FIBA in 1936 at Berlin and the three second rule was adopted by FIBA in 1948 at London.¹⁹ To further speed up play the centre jump after every made basket was eliminated in 1937-38. The game was restarted by the team scored against then inbounding the ball from behind their baseline.²⁰

In Naismith's original game he allocated positions to players according to areas of the court they were expected to cover. There were three 'forwards' in the offensive third, three 'centres' in the middle third and three 'guards' in the defensive third. These positions were not enshrined in the rules as they were merely tactical dispositions as envisioned by Naismith. It is interesting to note, however, that these terms are still used in modern basketball. A modern team of five players consists of two forwards, two guards and one centre.

Although the terminology has remained the same, the players' positions are assigned according to the function they are expected to perform on the court and not to the areas of the court they are expected to cover. For example, the centres in Naismith's version were expected to concentrate their activities in the centre of the

court in much the same way as halves in soccer or hockey. The modern centre, however, is expected to play mainly at each end of the court. The centre is usually the tallest player in a team and provides the last line of defence as well as shot-blocking and rebounding. On offence the centre is expected to remain around the keyhole and provide low post offence (back to the basket, close to the hoop) and ball movement (passing) around the perimeter. A modern centre will seldom handle the ball in the mid-court, as was envisioned by Naismith.

Before the introduction of these rule changes the game of modern basketball was far closer in style to modern netball. The two games were very similar in the early parts of their respective histories. This fact is not readily apparent to a casual observer of the two modern games. The version of netball played in New Zealand until 1958 also had nine players per team. This fact is indicative of the common origins of both games, although they have since developed separately. Basketball in the United States was viewed as a physical game for men. By contrast, basketball was viewed throughout the British Empire as a rather effeminate game, and one that was ideally suited to women.

The perception of basketball's effeminate nature was a key reason why it has never presented a serious challenge to rugby as the favoured game of New Zealand's males. However, basketball has had a long history in New Zealand, albeit for only a small minority of the sporting population. The earliest institution to introduce and promote basketball (and netball) in New Zealand was again the YMCA. One month after Naismith invented his game, the YMCA newspaper, Triangle, published the rules under the heading of "A New Game".²¹ As this newspaper was published internationally it is highly likely that it was read in New Zealand. However, even if

this was not exactly how the game arrived in New Zealand, it is still likely that the YMCA was still responsible in some way for the game's introduction here. The YMCA was certainly responsible for the spread of the game in the United States and YMCA missionaries travelled throughout the world in the late 19th and early 20th centuries taking Naismith's game with them.

The YMCAs in New Zealand have had an enormous influence over the development of basketball. The YMCA in Christchurch was solely responsible for the administration of basketball from its introduction until the formation of the Canterbury Basketball Association (CBA) in 1951. However, the confinement of basketball in Christchurch to the YMCA did much to hinder the development of the game. To play basketball in Christchurch before the formation of the CBA one effectively had to be a member of the YMCA. Basketball developed very slowly due to the lack of priority given to basketball in Christchurch, in common with YMCAs world-wide.

The development of basketball in New Zealand was further handicapped. Male sports, such as football and cricket, had all developed significant followings in New Zealand well before basketball had been invented. The game required expensive gymnasiums and was viewed as an effeminate sport in comparison to the games inherited from Britain. It is likely that the Anglophile nature of turn of the century New Zealand also contributed to the reluctance to adopt an American sport. New Zealand's sporting ties with Britain grew very strong during basketball's initial period. As Britain did not adopt basketball it was not surprising that New Zealand followed Britain's lead.

Consequently, whereas rugby and cricket had well established national and international competitions in New Zealand before the first world war, the first non-YMCA basketball tournament was not held until 1937.²² Although competitions were introduced for both men and women in YMCAs from as early as 1914, they were only on a small scale and the sport could never achieve the profile of its larger counterparts in such a limited institution.²³ Even though basketball was a contemporary of early nine-a-side and seven-a-side netball in New Zealand it was soon surpassed by netball, basketball's more 'feminine' competition, which was not limited to the YMCAs.

As stated earlier, netball is also a direct descendant of Naismith's original game. However, unlike basketball itself, the beginning of netball for women was by coincidence rather than design. A group of young women students from the nearby Buckingham Grade School were observers at one of the early basketball games played at the Springfield seminary.²⁴ These young women decided that they wished to play the game also. However, after the first such game, changes were made to the rules in order to physically 'de-power' the game thereby making it 'more suitable' for women. The early games of Naismith's basketball were very physical affairs. As the physical nature of most sports were felt to be undesirable for women participants (see **Chapter Three**), only games that were considered appropriately feminine were approved for women participants.

The desire to remove all physical contact from the version of the game for women meant that some of Naismith's original rules needed altering. The centre 'jump ball' to begin the game and to restart after each goal was replaced by a centre

pass alternating between the two teams. Defensive players were prohibited from attempting to gain possession of the ball from another player in order to eliminate as much physical contact between the players during play as was possible. Furthermore, guarding the player in possession of the ball was prohibited altogether in some versions of women's basketball.[#] In 1899 a set of rules devised by the National Women's Basketball Committee (an American organisation) included the division of the court into thirds. There were six players per team with each player confined to a single third. The player in possession of the ball was allowed one bounce of the ball only. All physical contact and the guarding of the shooter was prohibited.²⁵

The division of the court into thirds, demarcated by painted lines (this was prior to the introduction of half-way and keyhole markings on basketball courts), was justified on the grounds that women's bodies were incapable of handling the strain of playing over a full court surface. It was believed by early netball enthusiasts that it was necessary to limit the physical exertion needed to play the game in order to protect the participants from potentially damaging physical over-exertion. In this way the concept of netball's strict positional demarcation was developed. The terms used to define the players' positions in this women's version remained the same as those used by Naismith (centres, forwards and guards). In the nine-a-side version of netball played in New Zealand until 1958 there were three players confined to each third. The modern seven-a-side version of netball still has

[#] For example, a film of a game played in New Zealand between the national teams from Australia and New Zealand in 1948 under Australian seven-a-side rules shows that whenever a player is attempting a shot at goal her corresponding defensive player must stand beside her so as to not impede her shot. This film is in the possession of Charlotte Macdonald of Victoria University in Wellington.

strict offside rules but the areas of the court covered by certain positions are far greater than one third. However, even in the modern seven-a-side netball no player may cover the whole court without being transgressing the 'offside' rules.

The lack of a co-ordinated governing body for the new game for women resulted in a variety of versions developed during a similar time frame. This variety makes it difficult to determine exactly how and when the various offshoots of Naismith's original game arrived in New Zealand. The variety inherent in the new game was a key reason why a New Zealand Association was not formed until 1924. However, the fact that different versions of netball were introduced into New Zealand renders the pursuit of a precise chronology of its early period in New Zealand somewhat irrelevant. The differing versions of netball, regardless of their origins, were eventually united under the common rules of NNZ in 1924. What is important, however, is the subsequent development of the various offshoots of Naismith's basketball for women into the game of modern netball.

The most popular myth about the introduction of netball into New Zealand is that the game arrived here in 1906. The Reverend J. C. Jamieson, in his role as the travelling secretary of the Presbyterian Bible Class Union of New Zealand, supposedly introduced the game he had seen played in Australia to a group of women in Auckland. Teams from Bible classes apparently took up the game and extended it into schools.²⁶ Unfortunately the Reverend Jamieson cannot be given credit for introducing the game into New Zealand. Netball in New Zealand certainly predates the turn of the century. The Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives for 1900 notes that Wanganui Girls' College had four netball teams in 1899 and even possessed an asphalt court.²⁷ Furthermore, in 1900 a game of

'basketball' was played at a sports day held for the pupils at Otago Girls' High School.²⁸

If Jamieson, or any single person or organisation, had been largely responsible for the introduction of netball into New Zealand then it is likely that the provincial associations would have subsequently played under common rules. This was not the case. Furthermore, if Jamieson had introduced an Australian version of the game into New Zealand there would not have been the subsequent difficulty in arranging international matches between the two countries; they would have played the same game. Interestingly, Jamieson himself never claimed credit for the introduction of the game into New Zealand although he considered himself as one of the first people to be involved with netball in New Zealand. In a letter to Meg Matangi, the Captain of the first New Zealand netball team in Australia in 1938, Jamieson states, "I have a special interest in basketball, because I think most of the earliest teams in New Zealand were coached by me, and I acted as referee at a tournament in 1907".²⁹

Regardless of how and when netball was introduced into New Zealand there is little doubt about how the game spread to become the most popular sport for women in New Zealand. New Zealand schools were responsible for the early growth of netball. As previously mentioned, Wanganui Girls' High School had four netball teams in 1899 and Otago Girls' High School first played netball in 1900. In Christchurch, St Margaret's College introduced nine-a-side netball for its pupils in the winter of 1913.³⁰ The first inter-school match in Christchurch was played the following year against a team from the Technical School.³¹ Netball was certainly played in Auckland by 1906 if the Jamieson story retains any credibility. The game rapidly spread through the city schools and began to move into the countryside.



Netball on Auckland Domain

An early 'basketball' game on Auckland Domain. Note the lack of a shooting circle and what appears to be six players per team (two per team in each third). Also the restrictive dress with the teams being distinguished by different dress. One team wears hats while the other has diagonal sashes across their blouses.

However, concurrently with the nine-a-side netball's development in New Zealand was the introduction of the seven-a-side English version. Played in New Zealand as early as 1902 when it was introduced into Otago Girls' High School, it was an even less physical version of the game played elsewhere.³² Guarding of the player with the ball was prohibited. However, as there were only seven per side, players were allowed to cover much more of the court than in the nine-a-side game.

The English experience with Naismith's new game only slightly predates that of New Zealand. Netball/basketball was supposedly introduced into England when an American, Dr Toll, visited Martina Bergman-Osterberg's Physical Training College at Hampstead in 1895.³³ The most influential person in the early development of women's physical education in Britain, Bergman-Osterberg was in 1899 a founder member of the Ling Association in Britain, dedicated to scientific physical education. She, and her colleagues were to have a tremendous impact upon the development of netball and physical education for girls. This impact is fully examined in **Chapter Three**.

The Ling Association (subsequently renamed the Physical Education Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) published the first set of rules for the game of netball to be played by British women.³⁴ Included in these rules was the reduction of the size of the ball to that of a regulation soccer ball (in the USA, Naismith's original soccer ball had been replaced by a larger, purpose built, basketball). The game of netball in Britain, therefore, was codified for women slightly ahead of the process in New Zealand. New Zealand also followed the British sporting lead by developing the game through the school system. The seven-

a-side English netball would gain a loyal following in the more Anglophile of New Zealand's girls' secondary schools.

The seven-a-side English version of netball replaced the earlier nine-a-side version at St Margaret's College and Christchurch Girls' High School in 1923. Rangi Ruru School also introduced English netball for its pupils in 1925 after the appointment of Miss Gray as the school's first-full time games' mistress.³⁵ Miss Gray had been trained as a games' mistress at Miss Sanderson's school in Dunedin. This school had been formed specifically to train local women to fulfil the role of school games' mistresses. This role had previously been filled by trained women imported from England. Miss Sanderson had herself trained in England as a games' mistress. The training was based upon English games and methods of play. The migrating English games' mistresses were a key factor in the growth of such English games as hockey and netball in New Zealand.³⁶

The lack of a central governing body for netball enabled the concurrent, and chaotic, development of the differing versions of Naismith's game. Netball had been so popular in the schools that ex-pupils wishing to continue playing formed associations in several New Zealand provinces. Associations were formed in Otago (1915), Wairoa (1917), Wellington (1918), Auckland (1920), and Canterbury (1921).³⁷ The first meeting of the Christchurch Basketball Association (hereafter called the Canterbury Netball Union or CNU, which is its current incarnation) was held on 26 April 1921 at the Normal school in Christchurch. Twelve teams applied for entry into a competition (including teams from St Margaret's College and Christchurch Girls' High School). Eventually, seven teams formed the first competition for the fledgling association.³⁸ The founders of the CNU wished to

include local secondary schools in the new organisation. This desire was sensible as the schools contained the major proportion of the player base in the early years of netball. However, the secondary schools did not join the new association and eventually formed their own inter-school netball association.

A similar pattern emerged throughout many regions of New Zealand, as many inter-school competitions were not affiliated to NNZ. However, in Christchurch, a primary school's association was affiliated to the CNU. This meant that a girl could play nine-a-side netball in primary school, move on to secondary school and play seven-a-side before joining a CNU affiliated team and once more playing nine-a-side. There were even many examples of secondary school girls playing for a school team on a Saturday morning before going to Hagley Park and playing for a club team in the CNU's afternoon competitions.³⁹ It was not until 1956 that the secondary school associations finally affiliated to NNZ and switched to nine-a-side netball.

By this time netball was well established as the premier inter-provincial sport for women. The first representative netball match in New Zealand was played in Wellington between representatives of the Wellington and Christchurch associations in 1923.⁴⁰ This was one year prior to the formation of a national association. A return match was played in Christchurch the following year. An interesting feature of the Christchurch match was that it was played on Lancaster park as a curtain raiser to a Rugby match.⁴¹ The formation of a national association in 1924, with the subsequent standardisation of rules between all affiliated associations, provided substantially increased opportunities for inter-association matches.

In June 1925, the recently formed NNZ gave its permission for the CNU to hold the first (unofficial) national tournament. This tournament was held on August 22, 1925, at the Normal School in Christchurch and finished on August 24 at Lancaster Park. Teams from Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin and Southland attended with Christchurch winning the tournament after a play-off with Wellington and Auckland. The first official New Zealand netball tournament was held in Dunedin in the subsequent year. The tournament has since become an annual event.

Netball steadily grew as a sport for New Zealand women and NNZ gradually affiliated new associations from all provinces. Netball rapidly outgrew other, previously established, sports for women and gained recognition as a 'national game' for women in New Zealand as early as 1929 when the Sun ran an article on netball under the title *A New National Game*.⁴² NNZ has grown phenomenally since its formation in 1924. The number of affiliated associations grew from the original four in 1924 to ninety-seven in 1995.⁴³ NNZ listed 11,876 teams in affiliated competitions in 1995. NNZ uses a multiplier of ten (seven players plus two reserves and a coach) to gauge the number of people active in each netball team, therefore, if one ignores the coaches, there were approximately 106,884 registered netball players in New Zealand in 1995.⁴⁴ This is in comparison to 183 nine-a-side teams, or 2013 players including two reserves per team, affiliated to NNZ in 1925.⁴⁵

Netball was, as we have seen, a late starter in comparison with other sports for women in New Zealand in terms of establishing a national governing body. For example, the New Zealand Women's Hockey Association was formed in 1908 and the New Zealand Ladies' Golf Union in 1911.⁴⁶ These associations were formed

sixteen and thirteen years, respectively, before NNZ. However, NNZ had established an official national competition a mere two years after its formation. The short gap between the formation of a national association and organised national competitions is unusual in comparison to most sports. This is indicative of the somewhat exceptional nature of netball in the context of women's sport in New Zealand.

The delay in the formation of a national association was due largely to the diverse versions of the game played throughout New Zealand. The national codification of other sports in New Zealand was conversely helped by the similar nature of the games played throughout the country. As we have seen, this was not the case with netball. Any desire for inter-association competition was inevitably handicapped by the differing rules played by the various associations. Therefore, without the prompting of inter-association competition a national association hardly seemed necessary. The national association was only formed when the desire for inter-association competition overcame the reluctance on the part of the various associations to compromise over rules.

After the formation of NNZ there was no real obstacle in the way of a regular national competition. However, the precarious finances of many netball associations hampered the establishment of regular, intra-seasonal, inter-provincial competition like that developed by the NZRFU for rugby. As most inter-provincial trips for netball had to be paid for by the associations, and the selected players, themselves, it was unrealistic to expect finance to be raised for a number of trips per season. This is why netball adopted the week-long tournament format in 1926. This format would undergo only minor alteration until 1995. The rise in sponsorship dollars enjoyed by

NNZ since 1973 has meant that new formats spread over a greater period can now be used for a variety of competitions. The astounding growth in sponsorship income for NNZ over the last twenty-five years is demonstrated in figure 1.1.

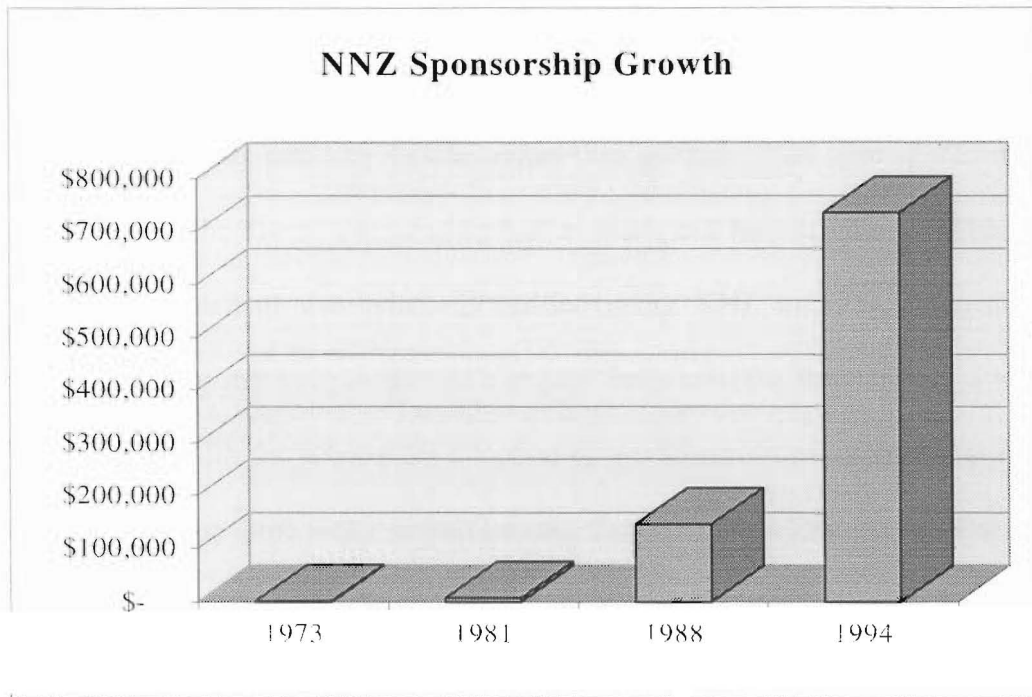


figure 1.1⁴⁷

Increased income has meant that the unions are able to self-finance their involvement in inter-provincial competitions. Furthermore, it is no longer necessary, financially, to concentrate this competition in one week. Consequently, beginning in 1996, NNZ has altered the format of the inter-provincial competition with play now spread over a number of weekends at different locations, rather than concentrated in one week at a single location. In 1996, this competition, named the Caltex Cup, had preliminary rounds on weekends from 17 August until the finals weekend on 1-5 October.⁴⁸ Inter-provincial competition has developed markedly since the first sponsorship for NNZ in 1975. Aside from the Caltex Cup, there is

national club league in the beginning of the season, age group championships, and secondary school championships, all supported by sponsorship income.

Furthermore, NNZ is able to fund an annual series between the national team, the Silver-Ferns, and one or more international opponent. This is a major development when it is considered that, for much of netball's history, international tours were often separated by decades rather than seasons. This state of affairs was initially due to the diverse nature of netball as much as a lack of finance. Although New Zealand netball was relatively unified under NNZ in 1924, international competition was still not possible on a regular basis until the formation of a world body in 1960 with the subsequent adoption of a uniform set of international rules. Prior to 1960, the three major netball nations, Australia, New Zealand and England, all had different rules. The desire for international competition appears to have been strong among all parties. However, in a repeat of the New Zealand domestic scene, the history of international netball is characterised by the reluctance of all the various national associations to compromise in order to develop a common set of rules. This intransigence would prove to be a great obstacle in the development of an international netball culture.

The desire for international netball competition was, nevertheless, evident from the formation of NNZ. In 1926, NNZ invited the Sydney Basketball (netball) Association to send a team to the New Zealand Tournament. This invitation was declined, and the problems associated with incompatible rules, and the lack of money, effectively prevented any further attempts at trans-Tasman competition until just before the Second World War.⁴⁹ Finally, in 1937, New Zealand and Australia attempted to reach a compromise on the rules issue. The Australian association sent

a delegate to the annual meeting of NNZ to explain the nature of the game in Australia and to attempt to establish common rules for international play.⁴² At the NNZ council meeting following the visit by the Australian delegate it was decided “That the NZBA consider the possibility of adopting international rules and negotiate with England and Australia on the point”.⁵⁰

The following year NNZ approved an Australian suggestion that an Inter-Empire Netball Council be formed to foster the development of an international game. NNZ, subsequently sent its first representative team on a tour to Australia in August 1938 in support of this development.⁵¹ It was agreed that while in Australia, the New Zealand team would play according to the seven-a-side Australian rules but also play some exhibition matches under the nine-a-side New Zealand rules. Although the New Zealand team had no problems winning all the exhibition matches comfortably, they could only manage to win half the matches under Australian rules.⁵²

During the tour a conference was held to examine proposals for a set of international rules. This conference agreed that when Australia and New Zealand held opposing views on certain rules then the appropriate English rule would be used. A complete set of proposed rules were presented for consideration at the NNZ council meeting of 30 August, 1938. However, before these rules could be discussed it was moved and carried by the meeting “that for internal N.Z. games the team be nine-a-side”.⁵³ With this one remarkably short sighted decision the NNZ irreparably damaged netball’s future as an international sport for New Zealand women.

The reluctance on the part of NNZ to compromise on the issue of player numbers per team would not be overcome until 1959. During the intervening years there would be very little international competition for New Zealand players. However, the intrusion of the Second World War played a part in limiting international competition. There was an international rules conference scheduled for New Zealand in 1940 with a tournament planned involving New Zealand, Australia and England. This tournament was to be held in conjunction with the New Zealand centenary celebrations in Wellington. However, the war forced the cancellation of the international events. The cancellation of this tournament meant that the next international netball game involving New Zealand would be delayed until an Australian national side toured New Zealand in 1948.

The 1948 Australian team often played two matches against provincial teams as, owing to the failure of the 1938 NNZ council to adopt the trans-Tasman proposal, a uniform set of international rules had still not been agreed upon prior to this tour. One game would be played under the New Zealand nine-a-side rules while the other under the Australian seven-a-side rules (invariably won by Australia).⁵⁴ Once again a rules conference was held in conjunction with the tour in an effort to achieve uniformity of rules. Mrs Rooney, the Australian delegate stated

We Australians have been sent over here to try and get uniformity of rules because Australia wants a regular interchange of visits. We consider that if possible we should make these visits once every three years but if we are going to do that it is absolutely necessary that we agree on rules and interpretations of rules and that we treat these rules as sacred. Once we agree on a set of rules and interpretations they must not be changed - not by one letter - for at least three years so that we will have the opportunity of meeting together and discussing them and that neither will change rules or interpretations unless the other agrees.⁵⁵

However, once again the development of international competition was hampered by the respective national associations' intransigence over the issue of

player numbers per team. NNZ, perhaps in an early example of trans-Tasman rivalry, was not prepared to give in to the Australians' insistence that international netball should be played by teams of seven players per side. There was a real reluctance on the part of NNZ members to change from nine-a-side. NNZ felt that their Australian counterparts had not given due consideration to NNZ's proposal to make international netball nine-a-side.⁵⁶ Australia steadfastly refused to consider a change to nine-a-side netball and consequently no agreement was reached over this issue at this meeting.⁵⁷ The failure to reach agreement resulted in NNZ voting to continue playing nine-a-side basketball at the expense of international contact with Australia.⁵⁸ In 1954 it was even decided that a proposed tour of Australia be cancelled over this issue. The official minutes state that "In view of the decision to continue the nine-a-side game in New Zealand, that the resolution passed at the 1952 council to send a team to Australia be rescinded."⁵⁹

It was the view of NNZ that netball was to the maximum benefit of its members as a nine-a-side game. By leaving the number of players per team at nine it was felt that the maximum number of women could play the game in light of the limitations on the space available to most associations. It was felt that players selected for internationals would be adaptable enough to play the seven-a-side game if it became necessary.⁶⁰ The mood within NNZ was that international competition was not the primary aim of the organisation and that NNZ had not done enough to encourage the nine-a-side game.⁶¹

Furthermore, the expense involved in sending, or hosting, international teams was a burden that netball organisations would find difficult to bear on a regular basis. The lack of efficient international travel effectively limited the scope of

NNZ's international involvement to Australia and the South Pacific, at least until the arrival of relatively cheap jet airliner transport. While international tours to Britain and South Africa were possible for the male sports of Rugby, Rugby League and Cricket it must be pointed out that these sports catered to paying spectators. Paying spectators and sponsorship are relatively recent phenomena in netball. Therefore, it is not entirely surprising that many netball administrators felt it unnecessary to irrevocably alter the game in New Zealand in order to accommodate what could only be infrequent international competition.

NNZ was fully prepared to forgo international competition in order to maintain the distinctive nature of the game played in New Zealand during this period. However, NNZ eventually relaxed its position on this matter in order to become a founder member in the World Federation of Women's Basketball and Netball Associations (subsequently shortened to International Federation of Netball Associations, or IFNA, when New Zealand and Australia changed the name of their associations from basketball to netball). A meeting was held in London in 1957 in order to establish an international federation with delegates from Australia, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Wales, England, USA, and New Zealand.⁶² A set of proposed international rules were agreed upon at the conference and circulated to the attendant countries. Included in these rules was the proviso that the game be played by seven players per team. The 1958 NNZ Council voted unanimously to adopt the international rules for domestic play in New Zealand from 1959.⁶³ With this decision New Zealand finally abandoned the nine-a-side game.

NNZ changed its position on the player numbers issue because the members of the council felt that New Zealand was in danger of being left behind if they failed

to join a proposed international netball association. At the 1957 NNZ council meeting a motion in favour of the principle of international netball was passed by 133 votes to 12.⁶⁴ Implicit in this vote was the knowledge that any international association would be based upon the seven-a-side game. This decision indicates a turning point in the attitudes of NNZ councillors. For the first time, international netball was considered more important than domestic New Zealand netball.

Included in the decision to form the IFNA was the agreement that every four years a world tournament be held. Furthermore, at each tournament, a rules conference also be held to introduce new rules, rule changes, and to standardise interpretations of existing rules. The first world tournament was held at Eastbourne, England, in 1963. The first New Zealand netball team to compete in England duly finished second behind arch-rivals Australia. In the subsequent tournaments New Zealand has only twice won the title outright (in 1967 and 1987 although New Zealand shared the title with Australia and Trinidad & Tobago in 1979).

Basketball and netball, therefore, share a common heritage. Although both games are developed from Naismith's original basketball they have since developed along separately. Early netball exponents altered Naismith's game to develop what they thought was an appropriate version for women to play. However, unlike basketball, there was a great delay in the formation of a recognised governing body. This confusion was compounded by the impression, throughout the British Empire, that basketball was a feminine game. This meant that basketball did not develop throughout the British Empire until much later than netball. The lack of co-

ordination among netball enthusiasts meant that the game was left to develop in isolation in various regions with the chaotic result of a series of different versions.

The differing versions effectively delayed the development of a national netball association in New Zealand and the later development of an international association. However, these difficulties were eventually overcome and netball in New Zealand became first, the highest profile national sport for women, and later, the most popular international sport for New Zealand women. However, while netball was achieving a rapid growth as a women's sport, basketball was stagnating as a sport for both men and women. New Zealand netball developed from an indoor game for men in Springfield and has grown to become the largest women dominated sport in New Zealand with a national organisation controlling the game from Auckland.

¹ CNU Minutes, 23 February, 1922.

² NNZ Minutes, Inaugural Meeting, 21 May, 1924.

³ *Ibid*, 22 July, 1924.

⁴ A. Ramsay, *A Century of Basketball and 25 Years of the Oceania Confederation 1991*, Oceania Basketball Confederation, NSW, 1991, pp. 10-37.

⁵ Keith Myerscough, *The Game with No Name: The Invention of Basketball*, in, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (April 1995), pp.137-152, p.141.

⁶ J. Naismith, *Basketball: Its Origins and Development*, Association Press, New York, 1941, p. 30.

⁷ Myerscough, p. 144.

⁸ Ramsay, p. 80.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 80.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 81.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 14.

¹² Myerscough, p. 144

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 145.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 146

¹⁵ Ramsay, p. 15.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 29.

¹⁷ L. Fox, *The Illustrated History of Basketball*, Grosset & Dunlop, New York, 1974, p.45.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 62.

¹⁹ Ramsay, p. 82.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 68.

²¹ Fox, p. 19.

²² *The Press*, Christchurch, 6 September, 1937, p. 3.

²³ Minutes of the Christchurch YMCA, July, 1914.

²⁴ K. Miller & R. J. Horky, *Modern Basketball for Women*, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio, 1970, p. 4.

- ²⁵ S. Cahn, Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth Century Women's Sport, The Free Press, New York, 1994, p. 86.
- ²⁶ Lane, p.3.
- ²⁷ AJHR, 1900, E12, p. 10.
- ²⁸ Eileen Wallis, A Most Rare Vision: Otago Girl's High School - The First One Hundred Years, John McIndoe, Dunedin, 1972, p.62.
- ²⁹ Letter from Rev. J. C. Jamieson to the Captain of the New Zealand Basketball Team dated August 16, 1938. NNZ Archives.
- ³⁰ St Margaret's School Magazine, Michaelmas, 1913.
- ³¹ St Margaret's School Magazine, November 1914.
- ³² R. Fry, Its Different For Daughters, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington, 1985, p. 137
- ³³ Jobling &. Barham, p. 30.
- ³⁴ Ibid, p. 30.
- ³⁵ Rangi Ruru School Magazine, Vol. V., August 1925.
- ³⁶ M. Belcher, A History of Rangi Ruru School, Christchurch, 1964, p. 31.
- ³⁷ Macdonald, p. 431.
- ³⁸ CNU Minutes, Inaugural Meeting, April 26, 1921
- ³⁹ Interview with CNU member Alice French.
- ⁴⁰ Lane, p. 4.
- ⁴¹ CNU Minutes, 11 July, 1924.
- ⁴² Sun, Christchurch, 27 August, 1929.
- ⁴³ 1995 figure taken from a copy of a NNZ breakdown of its membership for 1995. NNZ Archives.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid
- ⁴⁵ Lane, p. 7.
- ⁴⁶ Else, pp. 425-430.
- ⁴⁷ These figures are from NNZ Annual Reports, for the years shown on the graph. NNZ Archives
- ⁴⁸ New Zealand Netball, No. 9, July 1996, p. 38.
- ⁴⁹ CNU Minutes, 26 February, 1926. The invitation was declined but the Sydney Association invited a New Zealand team to Sydney in August 1927. This invitation was also subsequently declined.
- ⁵⁰ NNZ Minutes, 31 August, 1937.
- ⁵¹ Ibid, 31 August, 1938.
- ⁵² Lane, p. 11.
- ⁵³ NNZ Minutes, 30 August, 1938
- ⁵⁴ NNZ Report on 1948 Australian Tour, NNZ Archives.
- ⁵⁵ NNZ Minutes, 30 August, 1948
- ⁵⁶ Minutes of meeting between NNZ, AAWBA, and NZNRA, 30 August, 1948.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ NNZ Minutes, 24 August, 1953.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid, 23 August, 1954.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid, 4 August, 1953.
- ⁶¹ Ibid, 4 August, 1953.
- ⁶² NNZ Annual Report, 31 March, 1958, p. 3
- ⁶³ NNZ Minutes, 19 May, 1958.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid, 21 May, 1958.

Chapter Two

The Other National Game: A ‘Girl’s Game’ Becomes the ‘Game For All Women’

The print media in New Zealand proclaimed netball as the national game for women as long ago as 1929¹. This claim was based on the highly visible evidence of the number of young women playing the game in urban New Zealand. This claim is misleading, however, as for much of its period, netball participation was limited to a very narrow age demographic. Participation in netball was limited to young women ranging in age from schoolgirls through to pre-married women. Furthermore, participation in netball was limited to women involved with institutions nominally free of direct male interference. Girls’ schools were able to institutionalise sport for their pupils, and unmarried women in paid employment had comparative economic and social freedom within which to pursue such ‘suitable’ recreation. However, once married, the demands of family life inevitably took precedence over female recreation.

The participation demographic of netball has only widened in the last thirty years in conjunction with the gradual relaxation of social restrictions on the role of women in New Zealand society. Even today, only a tiny minority of New Zealand’s population participate in netball, or even the dominant sport for males,

“Rugby: New Zealand’s Big Game”.[#] However, the number of netball players in New Zealand has grown throughout its history. The consistently high profile of New Zealand netball means that an examination of netball participation is inevitably a reflection of New Zealand women’s participation in sport. Changes in gender roles in society have corresponding changes in sports participation. Therefore it is possible to trace the devolution of gender stratification in New Zealand society by examining it in sport.

This chapter traces changes in netball participation and examines the social imperatives for such change. Participation in netball has gradually expanded from the initial involvement of schoolgirls and their instructors through to the increasing professionalisation of the 1980s and 90s. However, it is very difficult to determine precisely who played netball throughout the history of the game in New Zealand. This is because the various associations did not keep meticulous records of their players. It is more appropriate to attempt to draw a general profile of the average participant in New Zealand netball and determine how it changes through the history of the game.

SCHOOL NETBALL

There are several, easily discernible, overlapping phases of participation in netball. As the game was initially confined to schools it is obvious that the first phase of participation is therefore limited to school pupils and their instructors. The first twenty years of this century can be characterised as a period of

[#] This is the title given to TVNZ’s coverage of New Zealand rugby.

introduction and consolidation of netball. Regular inter-school competitions began to develop during this period and the first associations were formed. For example, an early inter-school netball match was played in Christchurch in 1914 between St Margaret's College and the Christchurch Technical School.²

Interestingly, this match indicates that the game was not confined to the private schools such as St Margaret's College but was promoted in the public schools, such as the Christchurch Technical school, as well. This is in contrast to the normal pattern of the diffusion of sports through schools, especially in England. However, compulsory education and the extension of 'free places' for secondary education meant a tremendous growth in the number of girls at all schools during this period. The development of schoolgirl recreation in Britain was strongest during a period when, realistically, only the middle classes could send their daughters to secondary schools. Furthermore, it appears that the rapid expansion of physical education during this period is responsible for the spreading of the game to most schools throughout New Zealand.

The relatively late development of netball in comparison to other sports, such as rugby and cricket, meant that it was introduced during a period when unprecedented numbers of children were enrolled in schools and therefore physical education was available to a far larger proportion of the school age population than ever before. Physical education in New Zealand's public schools was rudimentary, at best, before the turn of the century. It was treated as an optional subject for boys despite the fact that it was given official recognition in the Education Act of 1877.³ It was basically limited to military style physical drill, often conducted by ex-servicemen. Physical education, as such, was

unscientific and was intended to instil discipline in the pupils as much as to exercise them. Education administrators did not feel it necessary at this stage to promote a more scientific, and indeed varied and interesting, programme of physical education. The inspector of schools wrote in his report for 1905 that

on the whole we are of the opinion that, without giving more prominence to physical education than seems necessary in a young and sport loving country, nearly as much is being done in the required direction as may reasonably be expected under conditions that preclude the special adaptation of exercises to the personal needs of individual pupils⁴

This report, given the nature of the period during which it was written, refers mainly to physical education for boys. The reference to 'a young and sport loving country' implies a masculine sporting concern. This was the year of the 1905 'originals' All-Black rugby team and the dominion was in a state of patriotic fervour over the supposed masculinity and physical superiority of the New Zealand male. Furthermore, it was assumed that little more needed to be done in terms of exercise for boys as games were available for them. Unfortunately the patriotic fervour surrounding the first All-Blacks did not extend to extolling the sporting virtues of New Zealand women.

Protectiveness towards women, lack of physiological understanding and restrictive clothing had all contributed to the Victorian attitude that physical exuberance was hoydenish and unladylike. Deportment, essential to grace and social bearing, was an important part of the training of girls, and correct posture was encouraged in the interests of health.⁵

With no serious consideration given to a national curriculum of physical education, the schools were left largely to provide what they felt appropriate for their pupils on a school by school basis. Exactly what an individual school's physical education programme consisted of depended upon the philosophies of its administrators and the facilities available. Many of the wealthier girls' schools were able to offer socially acceptable activities such as tennis and swimming (in

secluded surroundings) around the turn of the century. If a school's principal or board of governors approved of sports for women, then it is likely that hockey and netball (either nine or seven-a-side) would be made available to pupils in the winter with the possibility of cricket in the summer. Schools that offered games to girls did so in order to offer some variation from the mundane military drill that was the physical education norm during this period. However, the schools in poorer areas often were limited to drill, owing to a scarcity of appropriate facilities for organised games.

It was not until the adoption of the English physical education syllabus in 1920 that games became part of the national curriculum for New Zealand schools.⁶ This syllabus also encouraged the adoption of the gym tunic that was to become the standard uniform for both school girls and netball teams until the 1970s. Netball spread from the schools that had already introduced it to the remainder of New Zealand's schools after the adoption of this syllabus, along with many other trappings of the English school system. Prefects, house systems and games' captains were as commonplace in girls' schools as they were in boys'.⁷

Inter-house sports competitions in schools were followed inevitably by inter-school meetings. Many girls' schools adopted the English public school games ethos in a striking similarity to their male counterparts. School prizes for sporting excellence as well as, in some cases, sporting blues were awarded annually. It appears the only obvious sporting difference between boys' and girls' schools was in the sports themselves. Masculine rugby and cricket for boys and the more 'appropriately feminine' netball and hockey for girls.

Inter-school sports tended to develop in a haphazard, disorganised way. It was commonplace for schools to travel great distances to compete with like minded counterparts rather than to form inter-school leagues in their own regions. For example Otago Girls' High School teams travelled to Balclutha and Ashburton for games in 1914 while no mention is made of them competing against schools in Dunedin.⁸ Part of the reason for this was the variation in the games played by different schools. Many schools in Dunedin played the seven-a-side English version of netball while others played nine-a-side. Therefore, competition between these schools was inevitably handicapped by the differing codes.

The secondary schools were responsible for the initial growth of netball in New Zealand. The nine-a-side version was the more popular and it was this version which was adopted by the fledgling NNZ in 1924. As the primary schools netball associations tended to affiliate with NNZ they also adopted the nine-a-side game. Ironically, although it was the adoption of the English physical education syllabus in 1920 that gave netball its first growth imperative in New Zealand schools, it was the nine-a-side game that became more popular and not the English seven-a-side version.

POST SCHOOL NETBALL

As the early netball playing pupils graduated from school they began to develop the next phase of participation of the sport. This is characterised by the formation of the local netball associations throughout the country after 1915. This phase did have a degree of overlap with the previous phase of school expansion.



Netball in Hagley Park

A close up of the ubiquitous 'gym frock'. This photo is probably from the late sixties as the stockings have been replaced by socks.

However, without the earlier school expansion there would not have been a move to form netball associations. Associations were formed in Otago (1915), Wairoa (1917), Wellington (1918), Auckland (1920), and Canterbury (1921).⁹ The players of these associations can be best characterised as pre-marital school leavers.

Teams formed in the workplace were a common phenomenon during this period. For example, NNZ life member, Marj Jenden, played netball in Wellington for her employer's company team, Whitcombe and Tombs (since renamed Whitcoulls).¹⁰ There were also teams from Teachers' Training Colleges and other tertiary institutions, such as the private secretarial colleges common in the large centres like Gilby's Secretarial College in Christchurch, catering to women wanting to play netball. School old girls' teams were also a common feature of early netball competitions.

After leaving school, those players who wished to continue their participation in netball either joined an old girls' team associated with their school, joined, or formed, a team with other young women from their workplace, or joined an established club. The various netball associations were active recruiting organisations. Associations often advertised for players and generally attempted to keep as high a public profile as was possible in order to encourage new members. However, there was always a high turnover rate among players as most women gave up the sport when they married.

It was very rare for married women to play netball. It was not until well after World War Two that significant numbers of women began to combine other activities with those of the home-maker. Married women limited their

involvement in leisure so as not to conflict with their duties as mother and homemaker. "Marriage in New Zealand was the main occupation of women."¹¹ Former New Zealand netball and basketball representative, and former Silver Fern's Coach, Lois Muir, states that "as soon as you were married, they (netball administrators) expected you to stay home, have children, and rock the cradle".¹²

This attitude was not limited to netball. Similar stories are told by women competitors in most sports played in New Zealand. Champion field athlete of the 1950s and 1960s, Valerie Soper-Young, states "I actually stopped work when I got married. Women did then. Isn't that Terrible".¹³ However, not all married women excluded themselves from roles in netball altogether, but those who remained tended to restrict themselves to administration and refereeing. Ironically, Muir and Soper-Young were two of the few non-conformists who continued to play their sports after both marriage and the birth of children.

However, the inter-war netball player was still confined within a remarkably narrow demographic. Characteristically, after playing netball at school, young women had a few short years before marriage inevitably removed them from active netball participation. It was extremely unusual, therefore, for many netball players to be over the age of twenty-five during this period. This is a key reason for the relatively slow, but nevertheless steady, growth of netball in comparison to the extraordinary growth experienced since the 1970s. Furthermore, netball was competing for players from this narrow demographic with the other few sports organisations catering for women's sport and recreation. From 1927 until 1950 the number of netball teams affiliated to NNZ increased from 267 to 2180 or an average of 83 per year.¹⁴ By contrast, between 1951 and 1995 this figure grew to

11876 teams or an average of 220 per year.¹⁵ This extraordinary increase is attributable, not to a greater penetration of the existing, and limited, age demographic, but to the expansion of that demographic in both directions. Younger girls were able to take up netball and more women began to play netball after marriage.

For whatever reasons a young women played netball during this period, the pattern of involvement for New Zealand as a whole remained remarkably similar. Netball was first discovered at school and then continued upon leaving school until the demands of married life interfered with sport. The netball associations themselves did little to counteract this trend. Competitions were inevitably held on Saturdays. For women with families this time often conflicted with family commitments. The home did not grind to a halt on weekends. The demands of the husband's and children's leisure activities on weekends often drew upon the time of the mother. This meant that women's recreation suffered as women tended to come last in the family leisure pecking order.

NETBALL FOR OLDER WOMEN

The tendency for women to limit recreation after marriage only began to change as the growth of the women's liberation movement throughout the western world changed attitudes towards gender roles in the conventional nuclear family. Women now tend to spend less time in the home, either through re-entering the paid work-force, or through increased leisure activities. As social attitudes towards the role of women have relaxed, women have experienced a greater choice in terms of how they spend their time. A woman's role is no longer expected to be solely the maintenance of a 'good home'. Furthermore, the

consistent development of household labour-saving devices has led to less time spent in work around the house. Therefore, there was more leisure time available to those women who did remain at home than was previously possible.

To cater for this increase in available leisure time for home-makers there emerged a third phase of netball participation. Many netball associations introduced mid-week competitions during the 1970s. Players who had withdrawn from competition when they married have been able to return to the game in a more convenient competition time-frame. Mid-week netball has also attracted new players to the game. It is often played in a less competitive manner than its weekend counterpart and, as such, provides a good introduction, or gradual re-introduction, to the game for many women who might otherwise never have had the opportunity.

Mid-week netball competitions have also provided the associations with increased membership and the associated benefit of increased funds through subscriptions. Also, the facilities of the various associations do not lie dormant during the week which enables a more efficient use of available facilities. A further bonus is that valuable skills are not lost to the game due to premature retirements from competition. Mid-week competitions provide the associations with a greater pool of players, coaches and referees from which to draw upon. It is not uncommon for the mid-week aficionado to later return to the more competitive environment of weekend competition.

The increased participation of married women in sport together with the adaptation of competitions to cater for players who would otherwise be unable to compete has altered the structure of NNZ. Figure **2.1** graphically demonstrates the

dramatic increase in playing numbers, since the 1970s, largely attributable to the increasing upper age demographic of netball players.

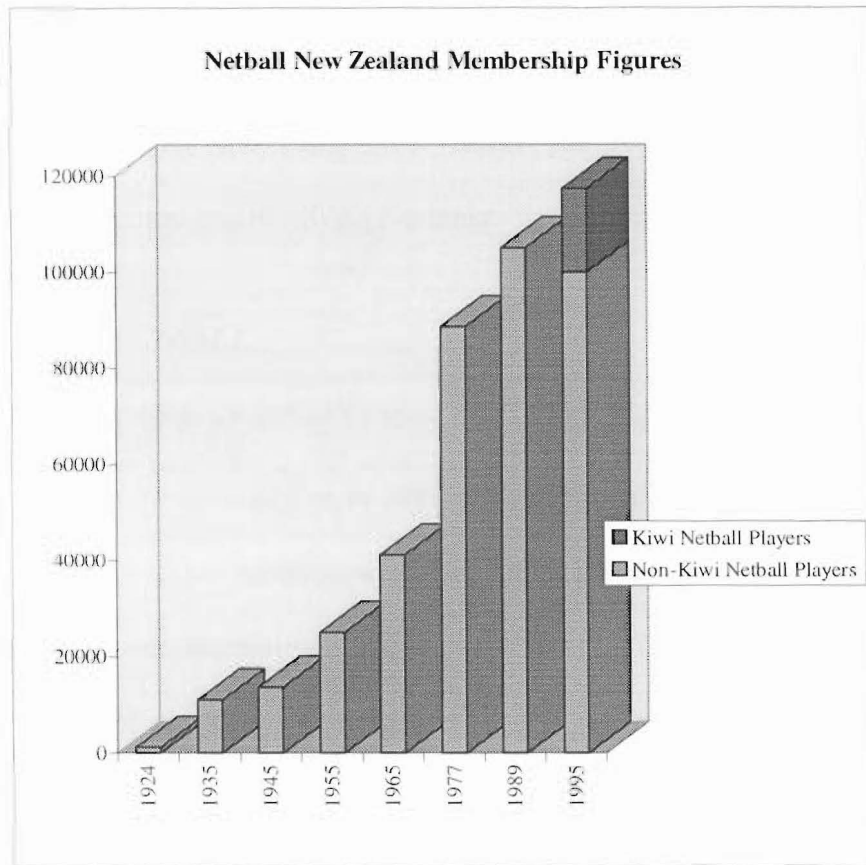


Figure 2.1¹⁶

The increasing age profile of netball is such that no longer can the sport be characterised as a game for schoolgirls and young women. Further evidence of this trend is the adoption of the successful 'golden oldies' format by netball in which players must be over 35 years of age and the competition is in a purely social context. Scores are not kept and therefore no team 'wins'.

Netball administrators have positioned the game to benefit from the increase in potential players as attitudes towards the role of women in society have altered to allow women far greater freedom. The introduction of new competition

formats has enabled the return of players once lost to the game. The rapid expansion of netball is due to the corresponding increase in the demographic of available players. Allied to the philosophy of positioning the game to take advantage of changes in participation is the introduction of the 'Kiwi Netball' format to introduce the game to a much younger demographic in a non competitive and non gender-divided manner.

KIWI NETBALL

The age profile of netball in New Zealand has expanded downward as well as upward with the introduction in 1988 of Kiwi Netball to cater for children aged five to twelve. This adaptation is part of a Hillary Commission sponsored programme (in conjunction with the relevant sporting bodies) in several sports in New Zealand to encourage participation by children in a variety of sports at an introductory and non-competitive level. The Kiwi Sport programme is intended to provide increased quality, quantity, variety and equity in junior sport. It is also aimed at encouraging participation, enjoyment, good sporting behaviour and sequential skill development by modifying existing forms of many sports.¹⁷ As the Kiwi Sport programme is non-gender specific, both sexes participate equally in all activities. In 1989, Kiwi Sport programmes were functioning in 50% of all New Zealand primary and intermediate schools. This figure had increased to 94% in 1992.

The Kiwi Netball programme is administered through NNZ by the Smokefree Netball Development Co-ordinators. NNZ catered for 1879 Kiwi Netball teams in 1995.¹⁸ This figure represents 16% of the total number of teams

affiliated to NNZ. There are five development co-ordinators, each assigned to a specific region of New Zealand. The co-ordinators are full-time employees of NNZ which has a budget for the programme of approximately \$350,000 per annum, of which the Health Sponsorship Council, under the Smokefree logo, contributes roughly 25%.¹⁹

The coaching of Kiwi Netball is under the direction of the NNZ coaching co-ordinator, Lois Muir. The bulk of the actual coaching is undertaken through the provincial unions, as part of a general competitive structure for primary schools, with supervision and support from NNZ. Kiwi Netball, and normal netball competitions for adolescents, are based both in the schools and in the provincial unions. There is generally a close liaison between the various unions and school sporting bodies which ensures that aspiring netball players needs are adequately catered for.

The individual netball unions are free to introduce participation programmes as they see fit. For example, a further programme that caters for very young children, ranging in age from two to eight, is Nettabury, or pre-Kiwi netball, run by the CNU. For approximately six weeks each winter up to 200 children, of both sexes and ranging in age from two to eight, participate in basic ball skills and activities at the CNU's Hagley Park complex. The aim of this programme is to provide elementary ball and participatory skills for young children as a prelude for any of the subsequent Kiwi Sports.²⁰

The end result of programmes targeted at both younger and older participants is that age is no longer a barrier to participation in netball. Netball players now tend to start playing at an earlier age and continue with the game for

far longer periods than was previously the norm. This increase in the age profile of netball has been responsible for a large increase in the number of people participating in the sport. NNZ has aimed to expand its age profile rather than attempting to attract a higher percentage of the existing age group to netball.

NETBALL'S ELITE PLAYERS

A key aspect of the growth of netball has been the 'professionalisation' of the game in New Zealand. This does not mean that there has been the development of a fully professional league in New Zealand. It does, however, refer to the growth of the administration and marketing arms of netball together with the increasingly 'professional' attitude of elite players. Furthermore, the influx of corporate sponsorship capital and an increasingly aggressive marketing strategy have increased the visibility of netball to an unprecedented extent. Netball has grown from 'a good game for girls' into an exciting, media-accessible, spectator sport.

A key aspect of the professionalisation of netball has been the contracting of elite level players to NNZ. Ironically, although top players have only received contracts since the mid 80s, the issue of contracting netball players is not a new idea. The concept of contracting New Zealand netball representatives was first mooted by members of the NNZ council before the Second World War. A proposal to place all representative players on contracts with NNZ was moved and carried at the executive meeting of NNZ on 1 September 1938.²¹ The executive was given the right to co-opt individuals from other sporting organisations in order to gain advice on how best to achieve this aim. However, it appears that

nothing ever eventuated from this proposal. It was somewhat of a pointless idea as there was no intention to pay players. It was merely intended to prevent representative players from leaving the game after receiving the benefits of representative honours. This is particularly relevant when it is considered that 1938 was the first year that a New Zealand team was sent overseas on tour, at considerable expense to all affiliated associations.

A form of contract was again mooted in 1962 when it was decided at that years council meeting that players who represented New Zealand should “give two years service back to the game”.²² Quite how the national association intended to enforce this resolution is never explained. This extraordinary resolution was enacted because it was felt that the players should give recognition (in the form of voluntary service) to the many people who had worked so hard to enable them to compete for New Zealand. This resolution was passed in the year immediately preceding the first world tournament in England. However, it should be noted that overseas tours were funded by the individual members of NNZ during this period. NNZ expected all associations to contribute what they could in an effort to finance a tour.

In order to send a team to the first world tournament in Eastbourne, England, in 1963, NNZ had levied every player in every affiliated association since 1958 at a rate of three shillings per player per annum.²³ Furthermore, it was decided in 1955 that 50% of that years profits be placed in a “sinking fund” to help finance future tours with the proviso that this figure was to be revised at subsequent meetings.²⁴ NNZ also ran a nation-wide raffle with a first prize of

£250. This raffle raised £5,330-13-6 with 10% of this figure being given back to the local associations.²⁵

The first New Zealand team to compete in a world tournament can truly be considered representatives of their sport in New Zealand as every affiliated member had contributed financially to their campaign. An interesting contrast is provided by the well financed New Zealand rugby teams of the period. While the 1963 All Blacks travelled by jet airliner to Britain, the women's netball team was forced to use the cheaper option of travelling by sea to get to England.[#] This resulted in significantly greater time spent on tour with travelling time measured in weeks instead of days.

The first legally binding contracts for players were introduced in the mid 1980s. These contracts were superseded by a new contract in 1993. NNZ currently contracts all members of the Silver-Ferns squad and the Young Internationals squad upon the naming of these squads at the end of each national tournament. Membership in these squads is for the following year. In return for the players consent to be used to promote netball, NNZ provides reimbursement for loss of earnings incurred while on representative duty. Furthermore, NNZ undertakes to provide the player with: apparel for all official fixtures; travel expenses for official fixtures (plus travel insurance); medical expenses following treatment of injuries incurred playing netball; and specialist advisors to provide fitness, nutritional, psychological, medical and physiotherapeutic expertise.²⁶

[#] The New Zealand netball team that toured Australia in 1960 did travel by air. The fares for this trip were far cheaper than an airfare to Britain however.

The player is obligated to attend all trainings and official fixtures unless prior approval is received from NNZ. The player is prohibited from playing for another national netball team for the duration of their contract. The contract stipulates a code of behaviour that the player must adhere to. Included in this is the condition that “The player shall not do anything which would or might be likely to bring NNZ or any member of NNZ, any sponsors, or any product or service marketed or sold by any sponsor into disrepute”.²⁷ With this clause NNZ effectively controls what contracted players may say and do when in public. Further to this clause, NNZ requires all contracted players to gain its approval before they are allowed to endorse, promote or advertise any other products or activities.

NNZ is able to terminate the contract after any material breach of its terms or if the player suffers any long term injury or illness. The player may terminate the contract at any time provided seven days written notice is given. The contracts solidify the relationship between NNZ and its elite players. While not rewarding the players financially for playing netball, the contracts ensure that the players are not out of pocket. Furthermore, the resources of NNZ are at the players’ disposal in terms of pursuing endorsements and advertisement work. The contracts stipulate that NNZ is willing to seek endorsements and promotional appearances on the players behalf.²⁸

Netball has been remarkably open regarding its professional aspects. This is especially true in contrast to rugby where a state of ‘shamateurism’, in which players could not officially receive payment for playing rugby although speculation was rife that many did receive large amounts of money, had existed

for so long. In respect to amateurism, the IFNA has traditionally adopted the current code of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).²⁹ Therefore, as the amateurism rules of the IOC have relaxed so have those of the IFNA. Ironically, therefore, netball had more 'legitimate' financial opportunities for its players than rugby until the recent professionalisation of rugby.

It is perhaps likely that individual players will soon receive remuneration for playing netball. This is most likely to happen in the Coca-Cola Cup national club league competition. Clubs will inevitably seek to entice elite players to their teams in order to remain successful in this elite league. Eventually this must involve cash payments. A possible example is the decision by, Silver-Fern, Bernice Mene to play netball for Southland in 1997 while living in Otago. Mene's decision was rumoured to have been influenced by financial inducements from the Southland Union.

This is an aspect that NNZ may have difficulty in controlling. However, the contracts between NNZ and its elite players provide the most effective means of control of player payments. The code of behaviour could also conceivably cover player payments. It is unlikely, however, that NNZ risks losing all control of elite level netball. Firstly, the opportunity is not available at present for players to make the sizeable amounts of money necessary to be able to disregard NNZ directives. Secondly, the structures are already in place for NNZ to move into a fully professional mode. Therefore if any move is made towards full professionalism it will most likely be from within NNZ.

The increase in government funding and commercial sponsorship of netball has resulted in a far more professional attitude towards the playing of the game on

the part of netball's elite players. The administration of netball has progressed from needing to levy all players in order to finance a national team to being able to independently finance all national teams and several development programs. Furthermore, the unions and top clubs are able to finance their participation in national competitions at an unprecedented level.

The influx of capital is a result of the increasing visibility of netball among the sporting public in New Zealand. There is no doubt that commercial sponsorship would be on a vastly reduced level if netball was unable to attract a significant following among paying spectators. Netball in New Zealand has grown from a game played initially by schoolgirls and gym mistresses into a well financed, semi-professional, sport played by children as young as five and by women in their sixties.

MAORI & POLYNESIAN NETBALL

Maori and Polynesian players have had a growing impact upon New Zealand netball in recent years. This is in terms of both player numbers and in appearances for representative teams. Although not strictly a separate phase of netball participation akin to the previous examples, it is appropriate to mention the changing influence of these groups upon the game in New Zealand. There has been a long history of Maori participation in netball. The captain of first New Zealand team in 1938, Meg Matangi, was also the first Maori to represent New Zealand in netball. Teams of Maori women were entered in the local competitions in many parts of New Zealand from the outset. There are annual Maori netball tournaments at all levels from schoolgirl through to union representative.

However, the comparatively low urbanisation of Maori communities until recently has meant that many Maori sportswomen have had limited exposure to representative selectors with a correspondingly low representation in national and regional teams. The lack of information about separate organisations catering specifically for Maori netball players makes it impractical to attempt to assess the actual playing numbers of Maori women. It is, however, likely that increasing urbanisation and easier travel in the last three decades, combined with an increasing Maori population, have meant greater prominence for Maori women netball players. In the 1991 census 9.7 % of New Zealand's population were Maori, this is an increase of 1% of the total population since the 1976 figure of 8.7%.³⁰ This increase is due partly to a faster birth-rate among Maori than Europeans and also to an increasing amount of New Zealander's identifying themselves as Maori.

Polynesian netball players have had an impact akin to that of Maori on New Zealand netball. This is due to the increase in Polynesian immigration, particularly from Western Samoa since that country's independence in 1962.³¹ New Zealand's Polynesian population has increased from 2%, at the time of the 1976 census, to 3.9%, in the 1991 census.³² The Polynesian population growth rate is far greater than any other ethnic grouping in New Zealand. Between 1986 and 1991 New Zealand's Polynesian population increased 34.4%. The comparable increase for the Maori population was 9.7% while the European growth rate was only 0.3%.³³

The Polynesian influence on netball has been felt particularly strongly in New Zealand since the selection of the first Polynesians in the New Zealand team

in the 1970s. Furthermore, many Polynesian international players play their domestic netball in New Zealand. Polynesian clubs are particularly strong in the large urban unions like Auckland and Wellington. The Pacific Island Church club in Wellington won the 1996 Coca-Cola cup and all seven first team players (although not all were of Polynesian descent) were members of the 1996 Silver Ferns.

The increasing influence of Polynesian players in netball is comparable to that of many team sports in New Zealand. Top level rugby and rugby league teams, particularly in Auckland, have a strong Polynesian component. The increasing influence of Polynesians in New Zealand team sport is symptomatic of several social phenomenon. Young Polynesians form a steadily increasing percentage of New Zealand's population. Polynesians tend to have low socio-economic status and are therefore attracted to team sports rather than the more expensive alternatives. Strong family and church-based cultures also encourage an emphasis on team sports.

A general trend, therefore, has emerged. As an increasing number of more affluent, normally white, New Zealanders drift away from the traditional New Zealand team sports and into newer, more expensive, individual pursuits like skiing, triathlons and the like, Polynesians have filled the gap. Unfortunately, as most sports organisations do not keep figures on the racial and socio-economic backgrounds of their members, there is only empirical observation to support this hypothesis.³⁴

MALE PARTICIPATION IN NETBALL

An ironic side effect of the erosion of sporting gender boundaries in New Zealand is the participation of males in what has traditionally been an exclusively female sport. Men have gradually taken an active playing role in netball since the early 1980s. The first national tournament for men was held at Rotorua in 1984, albeit on a far smaller scale than that for women.³⁵ The New Zealand Men's Netball Association (NZMNA) was subsequently formed after this tournament. This organisation was totally autonomous and as such the NZMNA duplicated many of functions performed by NNZ. This included provision of its own rules' committee and umpiring qualifications. The only major rule modification is the inclusion of a 'goal-tending' rule similar to that used in basketball to prevent defensive players from interfering with shots at goal when the ball is descending into the goal.³⁶ The greater size and often greater leaping ability of males has prompted this rule which is unnecessary in the women's game as no player has yet demonstrated a vertical jump sufficient to deflect shots from above the goal.

The NZMNA was amalgamated with NNZ in 1996. The initiative for amalgamation was undertaken, not by NNZ, but by the NZMNA. The male organisation wished to become amalgamated with the larger, more powerful, female organisation in order to overcome its perceived marginalisation. This is an ironic reversal of the norm when sports seek to gender integrate. The NZMNA's initial move to amalgamate with NNZ was in response to the 1991 announcement that the IFNA was now a gender integrated code, and consequently, member nations should seek to accommodate men.³⁷

The NZMNA was hastened in its desire to amalgamate with NNZ after being informed by both the Hillary Commission and the New Zealand Sports

Foundation, upon an application for funding, that these organisations would recognise only one national body for netball.³⁸ This inevitably meant that this essential source of revenue was closed to the NZMNA. The administration of men's netball was very aware of the dangers for their sport if they were further marginalised by being excluded from government funding.

Early on in the piece we decided that being a small part of Netball as a whole would also have advantages in the development of profile for the men's side of the game, in greater access to human resources for Netball for men, and in generating greater credibility in search for sponsors.³⁹

Amalgamation made sense for both parties in that it would eliminate the duplication of structures and organisations and would allow both parties to draw on each others' resources and experienced people.

The desire of the NZMNA to amalgamate with NNZ was assisted by NNZ's reliance on state funding. The increasing importance of Hillary Commission funding (see figure 2.2) has meant that NNZ and its affiliated unions have had to amend any constitutional protocols excluding men from any aspect of netball.⁴⁰ Part of the Hillary Commission charter is to seek to eliminate sex discrimination in sport. Therefore, it would hardly be appropriate for the Hillary Commission to fund an organisation that had traditionally limited the involvement of members of one sex, as was the case with NNZ.

This situation is extraordinarily ironic given the history of gender discrimination against women in New Zealand sport. Regardless of the irony, however, the continued exclusion of men from the upper levels of netball administration would also mean that NNZ would be unable to utilise the potentially valuable resources made available by including men. Whatever its reasons, NNZ has decided to increasingly promote male participation in netball

both as players and as administrators. In 1995 for example, Philip Dunn became the first man elected to the executive of the Canterbury Union. Canterbury was also the first union to institute a regular Saturday competition for men.⁴¹

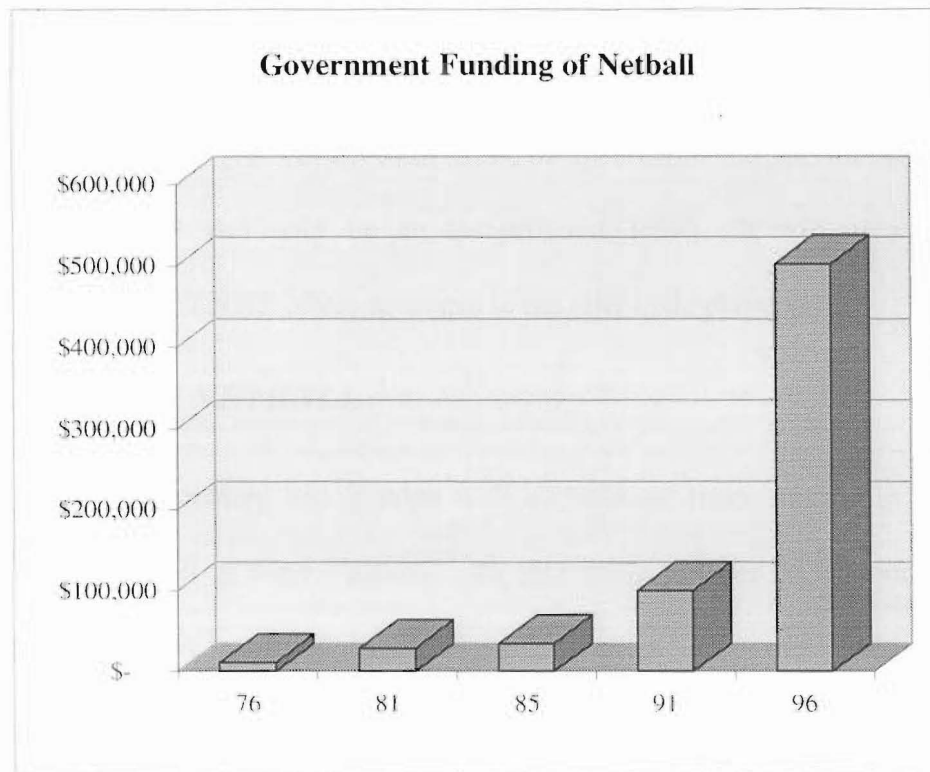


Figure 2.2⁴²

The ongoing incorporation of men into the structure of NNZ has met resistance, however, particularly from older members. Many of the life members of NNZ have voiced opposition to the inclusion of men in the organisation. Comments such as “I do not like men playing netball, or women playing rugby” represent a common theme among many members.⁴³ Others see the inclusion of men as a positive step, although the prospect of mixed netball does not appeal. Mixed netball is an unlikely occurrence as a serious sport as it remains outlawed under international rules. There are, however, unofficial competitions catering for mixed netball teams.⁴⁴

For the foreseeable future, however, men will comprise a very minor proportion of the playing strength of netball. As of September 1994 the NZMNA comprised only eleven associations with a total of 50-60 teams.⁴⁵ This figure is just 0.5% of the teams affiliated to NNZ during the same period. NNZ has the further goal to increase male participation in netball by 100%, from the current levels, by 1998.⁴⁶ However, even if NNZ meets this target, the total male membership will still only be an insignificant 1%.⁴⁷ It will, however, be interesting to see if NNZ offers contracts to the elite male players.

INDOOR NETBALL

NNZ has recently had to cope with a challenge to its monopoly over the running of netball in New Zealand. An increasing number of 'indoor netball' competitions have emerged in New Zealand cities since the 1980s. These competitions cater for mixed teams and are totally independent of NNZ. Indoor netball competitions are organised by commercial sports centres that arrange various competitions at their facilities where, for a prescribed fee, anyone can enter a team. These facilities are usually independent of each other and therefore there is no national structure of indoor netball organisations. The game of indoor netball itself is only loosely based on the international game of netball and as such does not represent a serious threat to NNZ.

Indoor netball does, however, cater to an important niche market. It is a relatively expensive sport as charges of over five dollars per game per player are not uncommon. Competitions are provided in the evenings during the working week to cater specifically for people with limited sporting opportunities and to

those with other, more serious, sporting commitments. The commercial nature of indoor netball eliminates the need for volunteers and administrators from among the players to run the sport. Therefore time spent with indoor netball is usually actual playing time. Teams arrive, take the court for their games, and then quickly depart upon the games completion. Indoor netball, therefore, is an ideal sport for people with a shortage of available recreational time. It is also possible that indoor netball has a similar effect to that of midweek netball by encouraging players to take up proper netball.

CLASS RELATIONS AND NETBALL

Class relations in New Zealand have not had a significant impact on netball participation in New Zealand. A key reason for this is that individual clubs did not have their own facilities. Even if a socially exclusive netball club was formed, it still had to affiliate with the local association in order to compete. As netball competitions were differentiated solely on the playing ability of the teams, and not on their social background, class was never relevant to New Zealand netball. Gender was the key factor in New Zealand netball. Unlike most male sports, factors like race, class and religion were never influential on netball participation. The nature of gender relations meant that all netball participants were automatically confined to the lowest sporting strata, regardless of any other factor.

The game of netball has expanded remarkably since its introduction into New Zealand. Initially a game based around schools it soon expanded into the

wider community. It was, however, limited for much of the century to young unmarried women. These young women tended to be the only women with the necessary economic freedom combined with the lack of familial constraints to enable them to pursue recreation in their own time. It was expected by the netball associations themselves that players would retire from active participation in the sport upon marriage, regardless of whether they had children or not.

As social attitudes have changed with regard to women's role in society, and in sport in particular, netball has expanded its pool of players far beyond its traditional age profile. Older, married, women as well as very young children have had competitions catering specifically to their needs. NNZ has positioned itself to take advantage of the erosion of gender restrictions on sport in order to expand both its membership and its financial capacity. The rapid growth of the organisation shows just how successful NNZ has been in attracting a far greater range and number of new players. Furthermore, the last ten years has seen the participation of men in New Zealand netball. Even though netball has laid claim to the title of the national game for New Zealand women since the 1920s it has only been since the 1970s that the range of women able to participate in netball has expanded beyond schoolgirls and young women. New Zealand netball has developed from a game limited to schoolgirls to one where men and women of all ages are now active participants. Ironically, therefore, in a period when netball faces unprecedented competition among sports for participants it also now has a far greater justification to proclaim itself a national game.

¹ Sun, Christchurch, 27 August, 1929.

² St Margaret's School Magazine, Michelmas, 1914.

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- ³ M. Hammer, Something Else in the World to Live For: Sport and the Physical Emancipation of Women and Girl's in Auckland 1880-1920, MA Thesis, University of Auckland, 1990, p. 54.
- ⁴ Report of the Inspector of Schools, AJHR, Section E1b, 1905.
- ⁵ Fry, p. 123.
- ⁶ Ibid, p. 125.
- ⁷ For a detailed examination of the sporting life and influences of English schools two works are of immense value. The first, J. A. Mangan's Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public Schools, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, examines boy's schools. K. McCrone's Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women 1870-1914, Routledge, London, 1998, has chapters on English girl's schools.
- ⁸ Wallis, p. 79.
- ⁹ Macdonald, Netball in New Zealand, p. 431.
- ¹⁰ Netball New Zealand Oral History Project, Marjorie Jenden, This project was undertaken by NNZ in conjunction with the Oral History Unit of the National Library and is comprised of taped interviews with life members of NNZ, it is held by the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington..
- ¹¹ S. Crawford, 'One's Nerves and Courage are in Very Different Order out in New Zealand': Recreational and Sporting Opportunities for Women in a Remote Colonial Setting in, J. A. Mangan & R. J. Park, eds., From Fair Sex to Feminism: Sport and the Socialisation of Women in the Industrial and post-industrial Eras, Frank Cass & Co., London, 1987, pp. 161-181, p. 173.
- ¹² T. Stratford, Guts Tears & Glory: Champion New Zealand Sportswomen talk to Trish Stratford, New Women's Press, Auckland, 1988, p. 160.
- ¹³ Ibid, p. 195
- ¹⁴ Figures taken from NNZ annual reports for years listed.
- ¹⁵ This figure is from a copy of a breakdown of NNZ's 1995 membership statistics. NNZ Archives
- ¹⁶ These figures are taken from personal correspondence with Alistair Snell, the Executive Director of NNZ.
- ¹⁷ S. Wade & A. McKenzie, The Enjoyment of Netball: A Comparison Between Kiwi Netball and "Adult" Netball Participants, in, Journal of Physical Education New Zealand, vol. 27, No. 1, Autumn 1994, pp. 15-20, p. 16.
- ¹⁸ NNZ membership statistics, 1995.
- ¹⁹ This information is from personal correspondence with Alistair Snell, the Executive Director of NNZ.
- ²⁰ L. Miles, Catching On - Netball for Beginners: Nettabury - Pre Kiwi Netball in Canterbury, in, Journal of Physical Education New Zealand, Vol. 28, No. 4, Summer 1995, pp. 4-5, p. 4.
- ²¹ NNZ minutes, 1 September, 1938
- ²² Ibid, Annual Meeting, 1962.
- ²³ Ibid Annual Meeting, 1958.
- ²⁴ Ibid, Annual Meeting, 1955.
- ²⁵ Ibid, Annual Meeting, 1961.
- ²⁶ This information is from an unsigned copy of such a contract. NNZ Archives.
- ²⁷ Ibid
- ²⁸ Ibid
- ²⁹ NNZ Annual Report, 1978.
- ³⁰ New Zealand Yearbook, 1996, p. 118 & 1985, p. 91.
- ³¹ Tom Hyde, White Men Can't Jump in Metro, Auckland, September 1993, pp. 62-69, p. 64.
- ³² New Zealand Yearbook, 1996, p. 118 & 1985, p. 91.
- ³³ Ibid, 1996, p. 118.
- ³⁴ See, for example, Hyde.
- ³⁵ Position paper on amalgamation from New Zealand Men's Netball Association. NNZ archives.
- ³⁶ Report on Meeting between NNZ and NZMNA, 17 September, 1994, NNZ Archives.
- ³⁷ Ibid
- ³⁸ Ibid
- ³⁹ Ibid
- ⁴⁰ The Hillary Commission gave NNZ \$70,000 in 1990. This figure was 6.7% of NNZ's income. This figure has steadily risen with 1994's total being \$319,600 or 19%. These figures are published in NNZ's annual reports.

⁴¹ New Zealand Netball, May/June 1995, p. 37

⁴² These figures are taken from NNZ's annual reports for the years shown..

⁴³ NNZ Oral History Project, Interview with Edna Yates

⁴⁴ Ibid., Interview with Marjorie Jenden.

⁴⁵ Report on a meeting between NNZ and the NZMNA. NNZ archives.

⁴⁶ Personal correspondence with Alistair Snell, Executive Director, NNZ.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Chapter Three

Netball: A 'female centred culture' or patriarchal supporters?

A common theme throughout the historiography of netball is the failure to come to grips with the reasons for the game's traditional popularity. Marian Smith and Brian Humberstone claim "Netball is the finest women's team game in the world. This is a bold statement, but one I am prepared to defend"¹ They offer no further justification for their claim. Ian Jobling and Pam Barham, in a narrative article on the development of netball in Australia, state "Netball was probably regarded as one of those 'moderate sports' - it was a non-contact activity, the skills were simple and basic and the playing attire was decorous and appropriate".² Aside from this statement, and drawing interesting parallels with the development of netball in New Zealand, there is little analysis of the game's popularity in Australia.

Perhaps the best attempt at explaining the rapid acceptance and rise of netball is an article by John Nauright and Jayne Broomhall in which they argue that "Netball became the sport for women because it embodied female attributes and was viewed by doctors, reformers, politicians, the media and middle class women as the best team sport for women and girls to play".³ In other words, netball prospered because it was accepted by influential, decision-making, sectors of society. Netball

would not have gained effective hegemony in terms of sport for New Zealand women without the acceptance of this influential elite.

Nauright and Broomhall also claim that “in New Zealand women netball players and administrators successfully developed a female centred culture and identity in public spaces where they exerted power and control with little male interference”.⁴ However, this position ignores the extent of the subversive influence that male dominated society was able to exert over netball. It was only because netball never threatened the patriarchal dominance of sport that it was able to succeed at all. Patriarchal society defined the boundaries of acceptability for netball. Consequently, women netball administrators were careful to ensure that their sport did not challenge these boundaries.

By ignoring the influence of the wider society, Nauright and Broomhall present a misleading interpretation of netball’s hegemony in New Zealand. Nauright and Broomhall argue that

Women involved in netball established a culture which they controlled. While this culture fits within the parameters of male hegemony, we argue that women have consistently pushed for change, although they have not often fundamentally challenged broader structures of male power.⁵

Historically, netball has conformed to cultural images that dictate how women should play. Rather than ‘consistently pushing for change’, netball administrators have, by contrast, traditionally been remarkably resistant to it. The key to understanding the success of netball in New Zealand is that the administrators of the game adopted a conservative ideological position in order that their sport benefit from social attitudes towards women in sport.

A more accurate interpretation of netball's role in New Zealand society is as supporters of the status quo. Netball owes its hegemony in New Zealand women's sports to the fact that it accepted the contemporary patriarchal ideology and used it to expand while not directly threatening male dominance of sporting resources. By contrast, in sports like hockey, tennis, and golf, women were in direct competition with their male counterparts for resources and, consequently, were less successful than netball in terms of growth. Netball was able to achieve hegemony because it did not threaten the male domination of sports, and netball's administrators succeeded in adapting the game to the limited available resources.

Therefore, in contrast to Nauright and Broomhall's depiction of netball administrators as progressive promoters of change, this chapter suggests that the game's officials tended to be cautious in their attitudes to change and indeed were extraordinarily protective of netball's position of hegemony. The women who ran the game in New Zealand were fully aware that netball owed its dominant position to its socially acceptable image and made every effort to ensure this image was maintained. Consequently, netball administrators made every effort to seek positive publicity wherever possible.

By protecting the positive image of the game in the eyes of the public it was felt that netball would be able continue its hegemony at the expense of its more anti-patriarchal competition among women's sports. It is for this reason that netball was not active in seeking to push the envelope of change in regard to the male dominance of sport. Netball did not stand to gain from seeking to loosen the social restrictions on women's sport but instead risked losing the acceptability that was so crucial to the maintenance of netball's hegemony. However, as the boundaries

dictating women's role in sports have been loosened, netball has been positioned to take advantage of advances made elsewhere. Netball, therefore, has not been the instigator of change, but rather its benefactor. Netball did not seek actually to expand the zone of acceptability but expanded to fill the vacuum created by change achieved by others.

Like all social phenomena, New Zealand netball is an historical creation. Its current characteristics are the product of forces which can be located firmly in the past. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the degree to which the game has been structured in a gendered fashion. Here we are looking at a process which transcends both time and place. What happens in New Zealand in the twentieth century has its germination elsewhere. Similarly, the development of netball at this end of the world follows a pathway trodden in a host of other societies. To understand the origins of netball and its growth in New Zealand we need first to place it on the spectrum of international trends and then to explain the historical elements which have defined its character.

Historically, societies have excluded participants from many sports by defining them as either masculine or feminine and discouraging the crossing of the gender boundaries subsequently erected. The New Zealand case is unexceptional in this respect. Indeed, it is only with the gradual erosion of gender stratification since the growth of the women's liberation movement in the early 1970s that the partial breakdown of the gender barrier in New Zealand sport has become evident. Netball is unusual, however, because it is one of the few sports world-wide that has traditionally been exclusively a women's sport. Rugby and netball, two of the major

sports in New Zealand, have both traditionally been strictly divided according to gender. However, this strict demarcation has been eroded since the 1980s.

Women now play rugby, and to a lesser extent rugby league, while, as we have seen, an increasing number of men now play netball. However, despite of the erosion of the gender boundaries, these sports still cater predominantly to their traditional genders. This is true not just in playing strengths, but in bureaucracy and in finance in particular. As previously discussed, in 1992, 69% of all members of sports organisations are male, while 79% of paid executive officers are also male.⁶ Out of 56 sports surveyed in New Zealand, only 13 had female memberships of 50% or more.⁷ 69% of women sports' participants were confined to just seven sports. These sports (in descending order according to total membership statistics) are: netball (100, 000); ladies golf (34, 800); indoor cricket (30, 000); women's bowls (30, 000); indoor bowls (18, 474); tennis (17, 859); and touch football (15, 900).⁸ Figure 3.1 demonstrates graphically just how great the sporting hegemony of netball for women in New Zealand truly is.

Of these sports, only tennis (and occasionally touch football), provides any form of 'mixed' competition and then only on a limited scale. All of these sports are physically non-confrontational in comparison with the most popular sporting activities enjoyed by men. While it is accepted these sports are certainly competitive, any actual physical conflict is kept to a bare minimum. This is in radical contrast to the most popular game for New Zealand men, rugby union, where physical confrontation is a necessary, indeed desired, aspect of the game.

Physical contrasts such as this can be drawn for most sports where it appears that males tend to compete more aggressively than their female counterparts. Even

in men's netball there are examples of male over aggressiveness. The *Dominion Sunday Times* quoted the President of the Little River Netball Association as saying "they (*the women*) are actually afraid to play against the men. Some of them are quite big and aggressive players. Most males are much more verbal on the court. They will answer the umpire back and rib the girls".⁹ There can be no doubt that sports classified as women's sports tend to be less physical or aggressive than those considered men's sports. The dilemma is whether this situation has arisen because women inherently play less physically than their male counterparts or because society has historically deemed it appropriate that they do so?

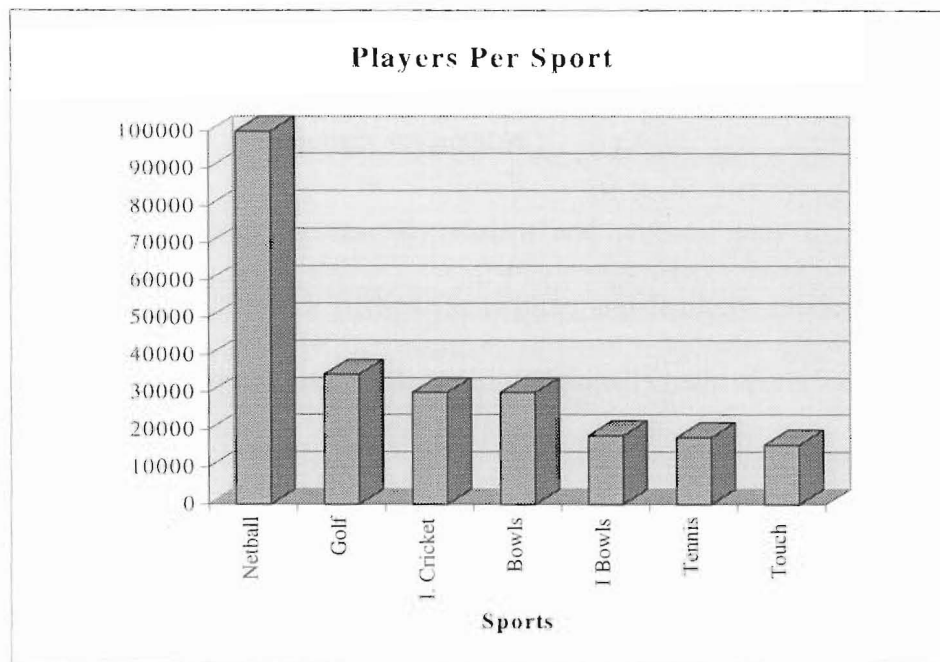


Figure 3.1¹⁰

Traditionally, the answer to this question has been that the difference is inherent. However, this position has come under ever increasing scrutiny. Jennifer Hargreaves insightfully states that "the belief in innate biological and psychological

differences between the sexes constituted a powerful and pervasive form of sexism - experienced as 'unproblematic common-sense behaviour' - which systematically subordinated women in sports for years to come".¹¹ The problem with asserting that women play less physically than men is that even in sports like netball there can be found concerns about the increasing levels of violence. For example, included in the contracts between elite players and NNZ is a clause stipulating that "the player shall observe NNZ's policy of discipline and shall respect the spirit of fair play and non-violence, and behave accordingly".¹² While no-one would claim this measure even remotely approaches the disciplinary codes and procedures of masculine sports like rugby, it is still a significant recognition that violent play occurs in netball. The traditional assumption by netball administrators that violent play has not been a problem in their game, and that therefore there has been no need to legislate specifically against it, is no longer sustainable.

The concern over increasingly violent and physical play in netball is an indication that the difference between masculine and feminine modes of play is a product of gender and not sex. Violence in traditionally male sports has consistently been viewed as an acceptable, if not altogether desirable, aspect of sport. However, as the gendered segregation of sports has gradually eroded so the level of violence among sportswomen has increased. For example, a recent rugby game between two teams of Nelson schoolgirls ended in a brawl. The brawl started after a player was tackled without the ball and involved the majority of the players on the field.¹³ What is most interesting about this incident is not its mere occurrence but that it was treated as an unfortunate, but unexceptional, incident. Spokes-people for the two

schools respectively declared “the incident was a non-issue and would not result in disciplinary action” and “that is the way rugby goes”¹⁴

It would appear that violence is not inherent in the genetic make-up of the participants but in the physical, confrontational, nature of the games themselves. As women progress in rugby, for example, they become socialised into accepting the violent confrontational nature of the game. Parallels can be drawn with the earlier description of rough play by males in netball matches. This is an example of players taking the playing ideology of their upbringing and transporting it into a context where it is considered inappropriate. Males are traditionally taught to play in accordance with masculine conceptions of strength, aggressiveness and the denial of pain. It is, therefore, not surprising that these characteristics are exhibited by these same players in all games in which they participate. Female rugby players are eventually socialised into playing a typically violent game according to its aggressive norms. By contrast, male netball players become socialised into playing netball less physically than they would traditional male sports.

As playing habits are social creations, it becomes relevant to examine the origins of gendered playing habits in order to determine how they have been transposed onto contemporary society. The origins of the contemporary debate over gender differences in sport can be traced back to the emergence of movements in Victorian Britain that sought to counter the growing trends of increasing educational, political, economic and recreational freedom of women. The aim was to convince women that, for the good of the future of their society and race, they should remain in the home. The key argument that has been used to separate masculine and feminine endeavours is that of biological determinism. In essence,

this argument revolves around the belief that men are suited for physical work and mental endeavour while women are suited for domesticity and the 'sacred duty of motherhood'.[#]

Late nineteenth century medical opinion held that women only had a limited amount of energy, or 'vital force', and that any effort expended in study or exercise would only detract from the amount available for women's true function, that of motherhood. Therefore, only limited physical exercise or mental stimulation was considered acceptable for women, as long as they were careful to avoid overstrain.¹⁵ In effect, this meant that all but the most sedate activity and study was discouraged for women as excessively draining of their 'vital force'. In this way the increasing freedom of women away from the home was successfully limited.

Kathleen McCrone argues that the patriarchal medical and scientific establishment used scientific arguments in an attempt to justify and rationalise aspects of Victorian society.¹⁶ In this way the confinement of women to the home was explained as naturally pre-ordained. McCrone states that most physicians believed that

the sexes should occupy separate spheres because women's reproductive functions, absolute inferiority and propensity to illness inevitably disqualified them from sharing men's privileges in the political, educational, economic and sporting arenas. They simultaneously praised the female body for the 'weaker' sex's elevation to the transcendent calling of motherhood and blamed it for its uncleanness and uselessness during and after menstruation and menopause.¹⁷

[#] For a full examination of biological determinism see; Hargreaves, J. Sporting Females: Critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sports, Routledge, London, 1994, pp.43-55. Guttmann, A. Women's Sports: A History, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991, pp. 87-96. McCrone, K. Sport and the Physical Emancipation of Women 1870-1914, Routledge, London, 1988, pp. 192-212.

She believes that these positions have far more to do with social attitudes than any scientific arguments but, unfortunately for women, they were espoused by many of the most respected scientific and medical minds of the period.¹⁸

However, the biological determinists' arguments were wrong rather than malicious. Edward Shorter argued

that the nineteenth century brought dramatic improvements in women's health, which had been wretchedly poor, and that these improvements were directly attributable to two related factors: advances in medical research and the nineteenth-century husband's heightened concern for his wife's welfare.¹⁹

It is likely that medical/scientific opinions carried so much weight in the late nineteenth century society precisely because women's health had been seen to improve through the application of medical science. Furthermore, when Victorian doctors became aware of the negative consequences of fashionable inactivity upon one's health they responded quickly by advocating some form of moderate exercise for women in order to improve their health.²⁰

However, the biological determinism and separate sphere's arguments have lasted in sport and society, more generally, far longer than the scientific arguments used to justify them. The separate sphere's argument has consistently been used to deny women access to areas that men have traditionally considered their own. Patriarchal society had succeeded in determining what was either appropriately masculine or feminine activity by providing biological and physiological justifications for what are now considered sex-discriminatory ideological positions. Hargreaves contends that

Biological ideas were used specifically to construct social ideas about gender and to defend inequalities between men and women in sports. Because large numbers of men and boys were seen to play sports, and women generally were not - the evidence confirmed that this was in the 'natural' order of things.²¹

The attitudes formed in the Victorian era have had a crucial influence over how women have engaged in sport since. Although virtually all societies have had varying forms of gender stratification, the Victorian era had perhaps the greatest influence upon the formation of the concepts of masculinity and femininity in regard to sport. The exclusion of women from sport has been a direct result of these concepts. Victorian-era pseudo-medical arguments about female physiology have been used to reinforce cultural opinions about what was appropriate behaviour for women.

Biological determinist arguments became increasingly popular during a period when increasing numbers of women were gaining higher levels of education and unprecedented economic freedom. Furthermore, women entered politics and social-welfare fields with increasing activism. Eugenicist fears regarding racial deterioration and decay arose in reaction to a shift in the social order.²² What better way to counter increasing feminist activism than to raise fears of racial calamity and promote a return to the home as the only viable alternative for women? Such a cynical view implies a conspiracy of sorts against emergent feminism. Although it is doubtful that such a conspiracy can be shown to have existed there can be no doubt that there was a severe backlash amongst traditionalists against women who failed to conform to inherited values of female domesticity. This backlash was also experienced in New Zealand.

British cultural and scientific ideas had a great influence over New Zealand thought until well after the Second World War. It is therefore of no surprise that biological determinism had a strong following in New Zealand. Organisations such as the Plunket society, founded by Frederick Truby King in Dunedin in 1907, were

at the forefront of disseminating biological determinist arguments in New Zealand.²³ King integrated tradition, and popular faith in science, into a clear formulation of the traditional ideal of womanhood, separate spheres, and the cult of domesticity.²⁴

The extraordinary growth and acceptance of the Plunket society and its methodical system of child rearing was indicative of its empirical success rather than the universal acceptance of its ideology. By 1947, 85% of all non-maori babies were under the care of the Plunket society and infant mortality rates had declined markedly.²⁵ This success allowed Truby King and the Plunket Society to have an enormous influence in the way children were brought up and educated in New Zealand. This influence was further enhanced under government patronage “and by 1924 had gone a long way to ensuring uniform, authoritative advice in regard to matters bearing on family life, and the rearing and treatment of children in health and disease”.²⁶

Truby King believed girls needed to be trained from an early age in their future destiny of motherhood. Truby King and the Plunket society were not alone in this belief. Erik Olssen states that “between 1895 and 1909 many women’s organisations, such as the Canterbury Women’s institute, came out in favour of teaching young girls domestic science so that they would be better equipped to create sound and attractive homes”.²⁷ Such was the strength of the domestic science in schools movement that beginning in 1917 the Education Department required every secondary school to provide domestic training for girls.²⁸ A government appointed Council of Education committee reported that “their mental capacity and physical strength are unlike; the boy is more original, the girl more imitative, and there is more danger of the girls suffering from overwork”.²⁹ It was a logical step,

therefore, to provide separate education for girls and boys once these attitudes had gained acceptance. In this way separate spheres and biological determinism became institutionalised in New Zealand society.

In essence, then, biological determinism and separate spheres arguments were imported from Britain around the turn of the century. These arguments found a receptive audience, like most things British during this period. However, New Zealand organisations, often with government support, adapted the concepts to the New Zealand scene. The influence of these ideas was felt most in the field of state sponsored education. The rise in the domestic science in education movement coincided with the popularisation of physical education in New Zealand schools.

The 1915 school syllabus advocated trained instructors of physical education travelling to schools and teaching both staff and children the benefits of the new ideology.³⁰ Prior to this syllabus, physical education in New Zealand schools consisted often of only rudimentary military drill, for both boys and girls.³¹ The report of the inspector of primary schools for 1915 notes that

Educational authorities are yearly placing more importance on the physical welfare of school children. Recent events have emphasised the fact that the nations efficiency depends to a large extent on the physical soundness of its men and women; and have made the duty of laying the foundation of that physical fitness in the children a very clear one.³²

With this syllabus the ideological shift away from military drill towards a more scientific approach to the physical training of children was complete. The introduction of the 1915 syllabus was the culmination of a gradual process of structuring and institutionalising children's play and exercise within the school-ground. What is most significant, however, is that this institutionalisation of children's play and exercise fundamentally, and irrevocably, divided the playground

along gender lines. Previously children were free to play as they chose. This freedom was at first limited by increasing teacher control of the playground and then severely curtailed by the introduction of physical education.³³ Children now played according to a syllabus.

Physical education for girls in New Zealand schools has a remarkably similar history to that which prevailed in Britain. Private schools for girls tended to be at the forefront of increasing involvement in girl's physical education.³⁴ However, the physical education movement for girls was not limited to private schools. In New Zealand, schools such as Wellington Girls' High School and Mt. Eden College introduced cricket and swimming for girls from the 1880s.³⁵ From the late nineteenth century, New Zealand schools began to adopt a physical education culture for girls in contrast to that typical for boys. An emphasis was placed upon exercises to promote suppleness and gracefulness rather than on the sport and physical drill taught to boys that emphasised muscularity and masculinity.³⁶ Games and exercises were adapted in order to be acceptable for women.

Conventional thought was that sport for women was about healthy exercise and modest social interaction. Not for them the increasing competitiveness and 'professionalisation' of British mainstream male team sports begun in the late nineteenth century. Hargreaves contends that middle class women were

impelled by convention to demonstrate that their sports had a utilitarian function, that there was no immodesty or impropriety associated with them, and that the level of physical activity was moderate. In this way, upper-class women extended their physical horizons without threatening their existing set of social relationships with men.³⁷



Archery In Hagley Park

One of the earliest sports that women were able to participate in was archery. Here both men and women enjoy an afternoon at archery in Christchurch's Hagley Park in the 1870s.



Croquet at Strowan

Croquet was both an acceptable sport for women and a social occasion for fashionable men and women. Here members of early Christchurch's social set at a garden party held at 'Strowan'. Strowan is now part of St Andrew's College in Christchurch.

Sport for women, therefore, was accepted by patriarchal society on the condition that such sports neither promoted 'un-feminine characteristics', nor threatened traditional male territory in both a physical and an ideological sense. It is no coincidence that during this period of increasing emphasis on refined physical recreation for women that netball began to gain a following in Britain and much of the Empire. Indeed it will be demonstrated that netball owes its hegemony, at least in New Zealand, to the fact that it deliberately avoided clashing with the established sporting patriarchy.

The thinking which underpinned the gendered development of sport continues, as we have seen, to shape the world of women's sports and of netball more specifically. It continues in spite of the fact that the original medical-scientific justifications for the separate gendered development of sport have long been dismissed as incorrect. Historians, sociologists and feminist writers have all advanced a number of different theoretical perspectives on the problem. However, much of this theory is grounded in the assumption that women's sports have inherently unequal status in comparison to male sports. Consequently, there is real difficulty in addressing the fact that netball is one of the dominant sports in New Zealand regardless of gender. Hargreaves claims that the "general tendency has been to suggest that men's ability to dominate women pervades all sports in a mechanistic and uncomplicated way".³⁸ Therefore, in view of the objective of examining the case of New Zealand netball, it is not necessary to analyse the bulk of theory relating to the gendered construction of sports. Therefore, like their British

counterparts, New Zealand girls' schools introduced games for their pupils that conformed to accepted ideals about how women and girls should play.

The one theory that does provide a good framework within which to analyse netball in New Zealand is Cultural-Hegemony theory.[#] From a Cultural-Hegemony perspective, the dominant sector of society exerts a persuasive rather than coercive form of control. Cultural-Hegemony theory has developed from Antonio Gramsci's belief that cultural interaction is more complex than the unsophisticated domination of the entirely powerless by the totally powerful.³⁹ Hargreaves claims that hegemony "is understood to be the result of people's positive reactions to values and beliefs, which, in specific social and historical situations, support established social relations and structures of power".⁴⁰ Cultural-Hegemony theory allows sports to be viewed as ongoing power struggles between dominant and subordinate groups as each strives to control unequal resources in specific social contexts.⁴¹ Cultural-Hegemony theory thus allows one to examine the historical male domination of sports not just as a simple male versus female relationship but as a far more complex, interactive relationship with males unable to gain total control. There will always be some men who will resist male hegemony while there will be some women who will support male domination.

By applying the concept of Cultural-Hegemony to New Zealand women's sports we can view them as a series of organisations competing with each other, and in many cases their male counterparts, for limited resources on an unequal basis. For example, netball is by far the dominant sport for women in New Zealand, but it

[#] For a thorough analysis of Cultural-Hegemony theory see, Hargreaves, pp. 21-24, and Guttmann, *Games & Empires*, pp. 172-188.

is by no means the only significant such sport. Other sports such as hockey, cricket, softball and, more recently rugby and rugby league, have strong female followings. These sports can be classified as traditionally male with significant female contingents. By contrast, netball is traditionally female with a relatively recent and statistically insignificant male contingent (see **Chapter Two**).

The female contingents of otherwise male dominated sports are therefore examples of organisations that have opposed the traditional patriarchal hegemony of sport. These sports have been in direct competition with the patriarchal hegemony over the same sporting resources as their male counterparts. However, because of this opposition, these anti-hegemonist sports have been far less successful than netball in gaining resources with which to grow. For example, in sports like hockey that are played by both sexes on common facilities, women have traditionally been allocated the least desirable facilities in comparison to their male counterparts. An Auckland women's hockey administrator recalled that "The men always gave us a ground out in the back blocks. Number four was always given to the ladies. We got the dirty end of the stick all the time".⁴²

By contrast, netball tacitly accepted the male dominance of sports and adapted accordingly so as not to compete directly with their male counterparts. In this way the sport has been able to create its own significant niche. Netball's playing facilities were seldom used for other purposes, except possibly tennis in netball's off-season, and as men have traditionally avoided netball, there has been no gender competition for the available facilities. In this respect Nauright and Broomhall were partially correct in their belief that netball players and administrators successfully

developed a female centred culture and identity in public spaces where they exerted power and control with little male interference.⁴³

However, Nauright and Broomhall's position is misleading, firstly, in that they see any gender stratification as a conflict strictly demarcated between males and females, and secondly, because they seriously underestimate the extent to which the male sporting hegemony was able, ultimately, to influence the shape and structure of netball. Their position ignores the fact that many women accepted and even endorsed the dominant social attitudes towards women and sport. Sportswomen encountered condemnation from other women in society as well as from males. Nauright and Broomhall's position also ignores the often considerable contribution made by men to netball throughout its history as well as the small, but increasing, number of men now playing netball.

Nauright and Broomhall imply that netball was able to achieve dominance over women's sports in New Zealand in an uncomplicated and effectively undisputed manner. There is no doubt that netball has long been the most dominant sport for women in New Zealand but this dominance is by no means complete as there can even be found anti-hegemonist movements within the various codes of netball-basketball, let alone other sports catering for women. Not all people who wished to play the various versions of netball desired affiliation to NNZ. A good example is the existence of the seven-a-side playing, and totally autonomous, Secondary Schools' Netball Association in Christchurch. This organisation refused affiliation with the CNU and NNZ until 1956 when they gave up their seven-a-side game and finally affiliated with NNZ and adopted nine-a-side (ironically only to change back to seven-a-side international rules in 1959).⁴⁴ This is in spite of several

attempts by both the CNU and NNZ to convince them to forsake their seven-a-side game in favour of affiliation with NNZ and the nine-a-side game.⁴⁵

Further anti-hegemonist examples include the autonomous seven-a-side netball association in Dunedin. An attempt was also made to convince this association to affiliate with NNZ, however, it was reported back to NNZ that “unfortunately they would not consider this”.⁴⁶ NNZ was also concerned about the level of competition from basketball for players.⁴⁷ One of the arguments advanced for the maintenance of the nine-a-side status quo in New Zealand was the fear that the players cut from the teams in the change to seven-a-side would drift off and play indoor basketball.⁴⁸ This threat was never truly serious for NNZ as indoor basketball has continually maintained a low profile amongst women in New Zealand. However, the point remains that the various codes of basketball-netball in New Zealand have never been unified under a single national body and that NNZ has continually been concerned with, firstly, gaining, and secondly, maintaining its hegemony over New Zealand women’s sports, rather than seeking to counteract male domination of sports.

It is against this background that the central theme of this thesis is established. New Zealand netball must be considered traditional supporters, albeit tacitly, of patriarchal hegemony in New Zealand sports. Netball has prospered precisely because it has been accepted by this patriarchal sporting hegemony for most of the twentieth century. While elsewhere, netball is undoubtedly a marginalised sport, this is not the case in New Zealand. Netball receives government funding for independent sports organisations on a scale only marginally behind the fully gender

incorporated New Zealand Golf Association and the male dominated New Zealand Rugby Football Union.⁴⁹

Furthermore, New Zealand netball has, since the 1960s, received paid television coverage, at first only of occasional matches, and now extended to all internationals involving New Zealand wherever possible. Television coverage is also provided for many inter-provincial games as well as the Coca-Cola cup national club competition. NNZ received £270-00 for television coverage for the year of 1965 from the New Zealand Broadcasting Service.⁵⁰ This figure has increased dramatically since that time. The television revenue for 1995 through 1997 will be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.⁵¹ This figure is all the more impressive when it is considered that netball is one of only four sports in New Zealand from which Television New Zealand purchases the coverage rights.⁵² It is the only women-dominated sport that has such coverage in New Zealand and quite possibly the only women's sport with such a lucrative media position in the world.

On the surface it would appear that New Zealand netball is a successful example of 'equality of opportunity' in New Zealand sport. Equality of opportunity is an approach advocated by liberal feminists to combat gender stratification. The basis of this approach is that women should receive equal access to the sort of sporting resources that men have traditionally monopolised. This includes equality of government funding, media exposure and its associated increase in corporate sponsorship. Hargreaves defines equality of opportunity "as an attempt to remove or compensate for the ascriptive and social impediments that prevent women from competing on equal terms with men, without otherwise challenging the hierarchical structures within which both sexes operate".⁵³

Liberal feminism therefore advocates an end to the inequalities within the current institutional structures rather than a reappraisal of the structures themselves. In New Zealand, for example, netball's government funding has increased from an initial \$10,000 in 1975 to \$502,500 in 1995.⁵⁴ However, this funding and netball's increased exposure does nothing to come to terms with the reason why netball was invented in the first place. Increasing funding and media profiles do not alter the fact that netball is essentially the product of gender discrimination. A true example of equality of opportunity would be equal funding and exposure for participants of a non-gender divided sport, such as the equal prize money and media exposure of some professional tennis tournaments.

Without doubt, netball has long held the highest profile of any women's sport in New Zealand. This profile is yet further evidence of netball's hegemony in New Zealand women's sports. However, this dominance has been achieved at the expense of the freedom of action on the part of netball's administration. Netball administrators have always been constrained in their actions by gender attitudes, held both externally to netball and by many of the administrators and players of netball themselves. New Zealand society allowed netball its success among women, as long as it did not threaten the traditional male dominance of sports in New Zealand.

As previously mentioned, Nauright and Broomhall argue that netball players and administrators successfully developed a female centred culture and identity in public spaces where they exerted power and control with little male interference.⁵⁵ While this is certainly true in respect to the day to day running of netball it is, however, misleading. This position ignores the extent to which netball

administrators themselves have felt constrained in their actions in order for their sport to gain acceptance in a male dominated society. Administrators of netball have always been extremely zealous in safeguarding the heterosexual, feminine image of their game. The entire shape and image of the game largely conforms to turn of the century ideals about what constituted appropriate behaviour for women.

It is no coincidence that the initial rise in popularity of netball occurred during a protracted debate over what sporting activities were suitable for women. There was little public comment over sedate individual sports such as golf and tennis for women but the issue of suitable team sports for women was far more contentious. Jock Phillips details how a proposal to send a women's rugby team on tour in 1891 was greeted with scathing criticism in the press. "Rugby was 'unwomanly' and the public would never support it. The attempt was subsequently dismissed as a huge 'farce'."⁵⁶ By contrast, netball for New Zealand women, was not viewed as such a contentious issue. As early as 1929 the media advocated netball for women.

What games should be played by women is a question still hotly debated at times, but golf and tennis-in both of which women excel-pass by unchallenged. Team games are not quite so easy to choose, but basketball is one which is rising in popularity, and the extent of its development may be gauged from the size of the dominion tournament which opens in Christchurch tomorrow.⁵⁷

For any women's sport to achieve a substantial following it first needed to gain the acceptance of the wider New Zealand society. Sports derided as 'unfeminine' simply could not gain a foothold among women in contemporary New Zealand society. Netball administrators realised the key to gaining and subsequently maintaining hegemony over women's sports in New Zealand lay in protecting the sports feminine image, and thereby the acceptance of the wider society, at all costs. If this protection meant limiting certain forms of behaviour or advocating a

conservative style of play and dress then this was a small price to pay. Without this approval netball could never have gained recognition as the 'national sport for women'.

The administrators of netball sought to control any forms of behaviour that were considered undesirable, whether in a netball context or that of the wider society. For example, netball players were prohibited from smoking in their uniforms in public. The CNU had banned smoking in their grounds and pavilion in 1941 which was followed in 1952 with a NNZ ban on smoking in public.⁵⁸ Another poignant attempt at social control is outlined in the following minute from the CNU in 1932

It was decided that both the Weeks and Radley Clubs be written to stating that they had been reported for hanging around the grounds with boys after the matches were over. It was left to Miss Brown to see about a private constable to be on courts from three to five every Saturday to watch for larrikins.⁵⁹

None of these activities was illegal but they were considered distasteful behaviour on the part of girls and young women. It was because of this distaste that netball administrators felt they had to legislate against such behaviour in order to protect the image of the game.

The desire to protect the image of netball inevitably led to a considerable degree of conservatism within the game's administration. Changes introduced in other women's sports, in such basic areas as playing attire, would not result in corresponding changes in New Zealand netball until much later, if at all. As early as the 1901 athletes competing in the Christchurch Girls' High School sports wore bloomers when competing.⁶⁰ New Zealand athlete, Norma Wilson, was ridiculed by her British counterparts at the 1928 Olympics because she trained in a skirt

rather than the, by then, standard shorts.⁶¹ Compared to these examples New Zealand netball maintained a remarkable consistency in uniforms for nearly fifty years after the adoption of the 'gym tunic' as the official uniform at the inaugural meeting on 21 May 1924.⁶² It was not until 1970 that the gym tunic was replaced by skirts and shirts as the official netball uniform in New Zealand.⁶³

Another example of this phenomenon is the protracted debate over the wearing of socks or stockings by New Zealand netball players. Concerns over the introduction of socks did not revolve around player comfort but around aesthetic issues. Arguments against the introduction of socks included "gyms would have to come down 3"-4", the unattractive appearance of cold legs in winter and how uncomfortable big girls would feel in sockettes even if gyms were lengthened".⁶⁴ Furthermore, a trophy was awarded to the best dressed team at the annual tournament. In 1956 the mayor of Gisborne donated a cup to be awarded to the best dressed team in the street parade or opening ceremony.⁶⁵ Therefore, NNZ continued to place a strong emphasis on aesthetic issues during a period when the rest of the sporting world was developing a more rational dress for sportswomen.

A key aspect of image making was the desire to gain official patronage. In this respect netball was able to gain the patronage of the most respected of public offices, the governor-general. The official patron of NNZ remains the wife of the governor-general, or the governor-general if the office is held by a woman. Governor-general Lord Bledisloe, in opening the 1934 New Zealand netball tournament expressed his belief that netball was "the finest game for girls in any part of the world".⁶⁶ Netball gained a tremendous boost from the acceptance and patronage from other offices and organisations such as the Department of Education

and members of the clergy. Even in 1995 the Catholic church had its own separate netball association affiliated to NNZ in Auckland.⁶⁷ The 'Reverend Jamieson myth' of the introduction of netball into New Zealand is another example of image creation through prestigious patronage. Even though Jamieson cannot be given credit for the introduction of netball he was still an early exponent and influential supporter of it. What better way to lend a new game respectability and gain acceptance for it than by claiming it was advocated by the clergy?

However, the focus on image protection on the part of netball administrators was wise as the media coverage of netball, in common with many women's sports world-wide, tended to focus more on the appearance of the players than on the game itself.[#] Comments such as "the girls on the court were physically a delight to watch - bright, clear-eyed, very alert, with beautifully-shaped limbs and figures. That is what every girl or woman should aim at", did not help netball in its quest to be treated as a serious sport.⁶⁸ On the few occasions when the sports media did take notice of netball it was to describe the aesthetic benefits of the game rather than to record the exploits of the participating teams. Women's sports were simply not taken seriously by the overwhelmingly male sports media in New Zealand.

Ironically, the promotion of a positive image resulted in a dilemma for New Zealand netball. While netball conformed to patriarchal notions of an acceptable activity for women, the lack of fast-paced action and drama in netball did not endear the game to sports fans. A newspaper report from 1929 states

[#] A good example of this phenomenon is the headline in London's *Daily Graphic* after Francina Blankers-Koen won golds in the 100m, 200m, 80m hurdles and 4x100m relay at the 1948 Olympics which read *FASTEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD IS AN EXPERT COOK.*, quoted in Guttman *Women's Sports: A History*, p. 200.

Public interest in basket-ball has not been great in the past, but there are indications on every hand that the attitude is changing. Perhaps it has been thought that the game is too tame to watch; but it should be remembered that in the United States particularly it is a popular game with men, and it is played extensively in the American navy. It can be made bright and interesting, and it is quite as good to watch as many sports which do attract the New Zealand public.⁶⁹

The contemptuous attitudes of New Zealand males towards the sporting efforts of women had more to do with popular attitudes towards women's sports rather than the efforts of the women themselves. It is not that women could not play 'like men', it is simply that society would not allow them to. The administrators of netball had a clear-cut choice, either accept social constraints and yet be successful amongst women's sports, or confront prevailing attitudes and be totally ostracised by wider society. The previously mentioned example of the public outrage surrounding early attempts at women's rugby demonstrated what happened when women attempted to confront social attitudes toward their socially defined role in sports.

In this context can be seen the nature of the sporting hegemony in New Zealand. Netball was a part of this hegemony, albeit reluctantly, because that was the only logical choice. By accepting male domination of sports, netball conformed to the prevailing expectation of women's sports and thereby were able to carve a significant niche within which to grow to the status of 'national game for women'. If netball had confronted the male hegemony the game would not have achieved its current position of strength.

Furthermore, it is only due to the early acceptance of patriarchal sporting hegemony that the game of netball exists at all. It was this acceptance from an early stage in America and England, and transported to Australia and New Zealand, that altered Naismith's game to suit contemporary ideals relating to women's sports (see **Chapter One**). The division of the court into thirds and the

removal of all physical contact were key alterations made to Naismith's original game in order to adapt it to contemporary ideas about the sporting capabilities of women. Netball would be insignificantly different from basketball without these two conceptual changes. Therefore, if the founders of modern netball had not bowed to contemporary thought, with regard to sport and gender, there would have been no need to change Naismith's game to invent netball.

¹ Smith & Humberstone, p.11.

² Jobling & Barham, p.36.

³ Nauright & Broomhall, p. 388.

⁴ *Ibid*, p.389

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 388

⁶ Cameron, p. 4.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 4.

⁸ Cameron, p. 5.

⁹ *Dominion Sunday Times*, Wellington, 17-11-1991.

¹⁰ This graph is collated from figures obtained from Cameron, p. 5.

¹¹ Hargreaves, p.43.

¹² Copy of standard NNZ Player contract. NNZ Archives.

¹³ *The Press*, Monday, 19 August, 1996, p. 4.

¹⁴ *The Press*, Monday, 19 August, 1996, p.4.

¹⁵ McCrone, p.193.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 192.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 193.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, , p. 193

¹⁹ E. Shorter, quoted in, A. Guttmann, *Women's Sports*, p.88

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 89.

²¹ Hargreaves, p.43.

²² Erik Olssen, *Truby King and the Plunket Society: An Analysis of a Prescriptive Ideology*, in, *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol.15, No.1, April 1981, pp. 3-23, p.8.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 7.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 4.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 11.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 13.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 9.

²⁸ Sandra Coney, Ed, *Standing In The Sunshine: A History Of New Zealand Women Since They Won The Vote*, Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, Auckland, 1993, p.203.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 202.

³⁰ Brian Sutton-Smith, *A History of Children's Play: New Zealand 1840-1950*, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington, 1982, p. 184

³¹ Coney, p. 242.

³² Primary Schools Inspectors Report 1915, *AJHR*, 1915, E1, p. 12.

³³ Sutton-Smith, pp. 176-190.

³⁴ See McCrone, pp. 59-100.

³⁵ Coney, p. 242.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 242.

³⁷ Hargreaves, p. 89.

³⁸ Hargreaves, p.18

³⁹ Guttmann, *Games & Empires*, p. 178.

- ⁴⁰ Hargreaves, p.22.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 23.
- ⁴² Coney, p. 238.
- ⁴³ Nauright & Broomhall, p.389.
- ⁴⁴ *Rangi Ruru School Magazine*, 1956.
- ⁴⁵ For example see CNU Minutes, 16 April, 1928 & 22 July, 1940.
- ⁴⁶ NNZ Minutes, 26 August, 1928.
- ⁴⁷ NNZ Oral History Project, Doreen Hes.
- ⁴⁸ NNZ Minutes, Annual Meeting, 24 August 1953
- ⁴⁹ These figures are from *Making Sport Happen: Track Record 1995/96*, Summary of the Hillary Commission's annual report to Parliament, p.28. The NZ Golf Association received \$540,375 and the NZRFU received \$536,000, compared to NNZ's \$502,500.
- ⁵⁰ NNZ Financial Statement, 31 December, 1965.
- ⁵¹ This information is from a copy of the contract between TVNZ and NNZ. The availability of this document was conditional on the fact that the exact figures were not to be revealed. NNZ Archives.
- ⁵² The other sports that receive payment for television coverage are the male dominated sports of Rugby, Rugby League, and Cricket.
- ⁵³ Hargreaves, p. 27
- ⁵⁴ *Making Sport Happen*, 1995/96.
- ⁵⁵ Nauright & Broomhall, p.389.
- ⁵⁶ Phillips p. 94.
- ⁵⁷ *Sun*, 27 August 1929.
- ⁵⁸ CNU minutes, 9 June, 1941 & NNZ minutes, 25 August, 1952.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 30 June, 1932.
- ⁶⁰ Coney, p. 255.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 255.
- ⁶² NNZ minutes of inaugural meeting, 21 May, 1924.
- ⁶³ NNZ Annual Report, 1971, p.5.
- ⁶⁴ NNZ Minutes, 12 May 1964
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 21-5-1957.
- ⁶⁶ NNZ scrapbook of newspaper cuttings, un-sourced and undated. NNZ Archives
- ⁶⁷ This information is from a NNZ membership figures which shows the Auckland Catholic Netball Association as an affiliated association of the Auckland Netball Union.
- ⁶⁸ *Star-Sun*, Christchurch, 8 September 1945.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 8 September 1945.

Chapter Four

Space: The Final Frontier

The netball hierarchy has traditionally been a tacit supporter of the patriarchal hegemony of New Zealand sport; although it has never been on equal terms with the traditional male sports. A common theme among the development of all women's sports in New Zealand is the chronic lack of resources in comparison to male sports. However, this unequal distribution of sporting resources between genders was a key reason for the success of netball in gaining its hegemony over women's sports in New Zealand. Netball was able to use the limited resources available to women's sports organisations more efficiently than any of the competition. Netball was able to develop at a far greater rate than other women's sports because it did not need large amounts of space or capital. NNZ was, initially, entirely financed by its members. It is only since the mid-1970s that NNZ has had access to financial income from paying spectators, sponsorship and government funding. Netball, however, was well established as the premier sport for New Zealand women well before the availability of this external financial capital. Furthermore, netball was only able to gain this increased funding because it was in a position of, high profile, hegemony.

As was shown in the previous chapter, netball owes much of its dominance to its social acceptability. There are a further two key associated advantages that have given netball a tremendous boost in comparison with other sports for New Zealand women. They are, firstly, a comparative lack of space devoted exclusively to women's recreation in contrast to that available to men's recreation, and secondly, New Zealand's mild winter climate enabling outdoor recreation in winter. Netball developed as a game that could be played on a small amount of space and yet still cater for a significant number of players. Furthermore, netball was able to be played outdoors throughout winter thereby requiring the minimum of preparation of the playing surface and eliminating the need for expensive indoor facilities. Consequently, New Zealand netball's hegemony rested on the adaptation of the game to take best advantage of the prevailing conditions. Netball administrators adapted the game in order that the maximum number of players could be accommodated on the limited space available.

Netball has faced competition from new sports as these advantages have been reduced through a more equitable distribution of sporting resources and the erosion of gender barriers in sport. Consequently, NNZ has, in recent times, adopted new strategies in order to attract new players and to retain its existing player base in an effort to protect its position. However, this position of hegemony has eroded despite these initiatives in what has become the sporting equivalent of a free market. This chapter analyses, firstly, how netball's physical surroundings have determined the shape of the game in response to popular attitudes towards women's sports outlined in the previous chapter, and secondly,

how NNZ has coped with the erosion of its competitive advantage in the last two decades.

An obvious disparity between men's and women's sports in New Zealand is in that of playing space allocated to sports organisations. Even a rudimentary analysis indicates a huge disparity in the area available to competitors in gender-divided sports. The area available for 'women only' recreation is but a fraction of that available for men. Netball, however, has adapted to this lack of space remarkably well. Netball uses the least amount of space per player of any of the major sports played in New Zealand. A netball court has the maximum dimensions of 30.48m x 15.24m, or 464.52 m². By contrast a rugby field is up to 146m x 68m, or 9928 m².¹ The difference is a ratio of approximately 21.4 to 1 in favour of rugby.

Table 4.1 demonstrates similar contrasts for most New Zealand sports. The sports chosen are intended to be representative of the differing size of playing areas and are not indicative of the popularity of these sports. It is for this reason that rugby league is not shown as it uses a similar field to that of rugby union. Cricket and golf are also not shown because there are no standard sizes for cricket grounds and golf courses. All measurements are the standard maximums allowable under the appropriate international rules. Table 4.1 lists the sports and the dimensions of their maximum playing surfaces. Also listed are the maximum number of players (the equivalent of two teams) involved at any given moment in a game for each sport, and the duration of each game expressed in minutes. It is

possible to gain a ratio of spatial efficiency of each game by dividing the number of players per game by the number of hours per game and the number of 100m² units of area for each playing surface. This ratio can then be used to compare each sport on its spatial efficiency.

It should be noted, however, that the measurement of minutes per game for tennis and basketball are, in this instance, approximations as these sports have no finite playing length. Tennis has no time limit at all and basketball has two twenty minute halves but the game-clock is stopped whenever the ball is not in play. Therefore, depending on the nature of a particular match, the duration of each match can vary wildly, although ninety minutes is a reasonable approximation. Furthermore, all measurements are for the maximum allowable under the appropriate international rules. This means that the duration of a netball game is listed as sixty minutes (four fifteen minute quarters), used at the elite level of competition, as opposed to the traditional duration of forty minutes. The aim of this chart is not to provide concise details of the games but to give an appreciation of the comparative spatial efficiency between these sports.

The ratio of spatial efficiency is slightly misleading, however, as it gives no indication for the economic cost of the preparation of different types of playing surface. A spatial comparison of a grass football pitch and a basketball court cannot give a corresponding ratio of the economic value of the two surfaces. Therefore, as long as land is plentiful, a large football pitch would cost far less to construct than a much smaller basketball court which is housed in a stadium. However, all these sports, except basketball, were played upon grass before the introduction of artificial playing surfaces

Table 4.1 demonstrates conclusively that netball is the most efficient user of available space with a ratio of players per 100m² per hour of 3.01. By contrast, Soccer has a ratio of only 0.14. These ratios demonstrate a key reason why netball was able to gain such an hegemony over its competition. Netball, quite simply, was able to make far greater use of the limited space available for women's recreation than any other sport. Furthermore, as only women played netball until the mid-1980s, there was no direct competition with male counterparts for the use of the same space.

Sport	Length	Width	Area m ²	Players/game	Minutes/game	Players/100m ² /hour
Tennis	23.77	10.97	261	4	90	1.02
Basketball	26.00	14.00	364	10	90	1.83
Netball	30.48	15.24	465	14	60	3.01
Hockey	92.00	55.00	5,060	22	70	0.37
Rugby	146.00	58.00	8,468	30	80	0.27
Soccer	120.00	90.00	10,800	22	90	0.14

Table 4.1²

Sports like hockey quickly lost ground in comparison to netball because they did not achieve the same level of social acceptability as netball, and they required far more playing space. Furthermore, as hockey has also been traditionally a male sport, women hockey players had to compete with their male counterparts for the use of hockey facilities. As we have seen, women universally suffered in such direct competition with men. As long as the allocation of recreational space was



Hagley Park Grass Courts

An afternoon of 'basketball' on the CNU's complex at Hagley Park (circa 1930). Note the grass playing surface and the gym frock uniforms with stockings. The team numbers are now nine-a-side as indicated by the six players in the goal third inside the shooting circle.



Hagley Park Asphalt Courts

Hagley Park in the early 1970s. The date is indicated by the partial change of uniforms. The teams in the foreground wear the new uniforms of skirts and shirts while one of the teams to the left still wears the gym frock. The Hagley Park complex is all asphalt in this picture.

subject to gender stratification then netball would hold a key advantage over any of the competition.

The allocation of sporting space according to gender was institutionalised in the space allotted to secondary schools. New Zealand schools have played a crucial role in shaping the sporting and recreational habits of their pupils and, therefore, the pupils subsequent sporting careers. The playing of netball in schools was encouraged by limited recreational space in girls' schools, or that available to girls in co-educational schools. This phenomenon, in turn, had a crucial effect on post-school recreational choices of young women, as we saw in **Chapter Two**. Table 4.2 draws a comparison of recreational space available to a selection of schools in the year 1930. This year is appropriate in that all the major sports were well established in New Zealand schools by this date and there was almost no crossing of the sporting gender boundaries until well after this date.

Boys' Schools	Area (hectares)	Girls' Schools	Area (hectares)
Auckland Grammar	2.87	Auckland Girl's Grammar	1.23
New Plymouth Boys' High	16.34	New Plymouth Girls' High	2.67
Napier Boys' High	13.94	Napier Girls' High	1.85
Wellington College	24.6	Wellington Girls' College	1.23
Nelson College for Boys	6.56	Nelson College for Girls	2.05
Christchurch Boys' High	11.48	Christchurch Girls' High	3.18
Timaru Boys' High	15.58	Timaru Girls' High	2.98
Waitaki Boys' High	10.25	Waitaki Girls' High	3.5
Otago Boys' High	2.67	Otago Girls' High	1.44
Southland Boys' High	7.38	Southland Girls' High	3.02

Table 4.2³

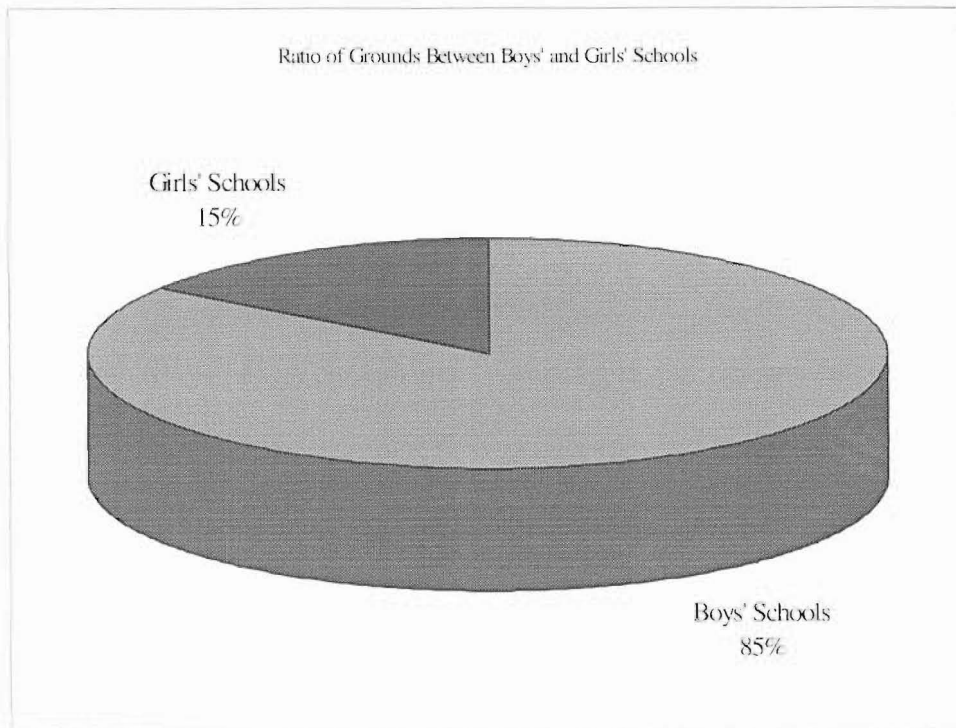


Figure 4.3

Figure 4.3 demonstrates the average ratio between boys' and girls' schools after the figures of table 4.2 are collated and expressed in graphic form. It can be seen that, on average, boys' schools received eighty-five percent of all school sports grounds while girl's schools have access to only fifteen percent of the total. This disparity was not benignly accepted as there are numerous examples of staff and pupils at girls' schools complaining over the obvious double standard in the allotment of recreation facilities. For example, as early as 1908, the Principal of Christchurch Girls' High School complained to the department of Education that "The playground is wholly inadequate, being barely larger than the dimensions of the asphalt tennis court, and shut off from the sun by the large brick building on the North."⁴ In 1949 there were complaints emanating from Auckland Girls'

Grammar School about having to cater for the recreational needs of over eight hundred pupils on less than five acres of hillside grounds.⁵

Furthermore, although most male sports are outdoor sports it was the boys' schools that built the first school gymnasiums in New Zealand. One year after the principal of Christchurch Girls' High School was complaining about the lack of space available for her pupils recreational needs her male counterpart at Christchurch Boys' High School was reporting to the department of education about the opening of the school's first gymnasium.⁶ Therefore, a boys' school with a strong tradition in rugby and cricket received an unnecessary gymnasium while its female counterpart did not have enough space to play rudimentary games let alone pursue the appropriately feminine callisthenics and Swedish gymnastics that were the main reasons for the construction of gymnasiums.

Protests over the inconsistent allocation of recreational resources were usually in vain as school boards of governors, or indeed the Education Department itself, were dominated by men. This patriarchal decision making elite tended to adhere to the convention that girls' sporting needs were insignificant in comparison to those of boys. Ruth Fry writes that

When Agnes Bennett wrote to the press pointing out the unfairness of the Wellington city fathers in providing only three-quarters of an acre as playground space for girls as against some 50 acres for boys the chairman of the college board in his reply dismissed her letter as 'windy piffle'.⁷

School administrators, in line with biological determinist arguments, did not believe that girls needed physical recreation at schools, after all too much exercise was supposed to be excessively draining of the vital force.

The lack of space has been a particular problem in heavily urbanised areas where all space is at a premium. It is here that the allocation of space for women and girls' recreation came under most pressure. Furthermore, male groups almost universally dominated the prime facilities and appropriated the most convenient times for usage when any recreational space was shared between the genders. A good example of this phenomenon is golf. Women were generally not admitted men's' clubs, instead having to form their own clubs and being forced to negotiate access to courses controlled by male clubs on less than equal terms.⁸

The lack of space available for recreation in girls' schools has, ironically, had enormous benefit for the development of netball in New Zealand. If schools only had a limited amount of space within which they were required to cater for the physical recreation needs of a large number of pupils then they needed to use that space as efficiently as possible. This need for spatial efficiency, together with the need to provide a socially suitable form of exercise, promoted the playing of netball in girls' schools. The same space could be used for netball in the winter and for tennis in the summer. Furthermore, both netball and tennis could be played either on grass or asphalt. This allowed netball to be played at schools with facilities as rudimentary as a pair of grass tennis courts. As most sporting habits are formed during a child's education, if a schoolgirl played netball at school then it is likely that she would play netball, if she played any sport after leaving school.

The advantage that the small space required for the establishment of a complex of netball courts offered was decisive for the achievement of netball's hegemony in New Zealand. The small area required enabled netball unions to

establish court complexes in one centralised location catering for the netballing requirements of entire cities. This in turn eliminated the need for duplication of resources in several locations. The central complex provided the most efficient use of historically scarce financial resources. Excellent examples of this sort of complex are those at Hāitaitai in Wellington and Hagley Park in Christchurch. The Hagley park complex in Christchurch currently holds forty asphalt netball courts. These courts were used by a total of 256 senior and 209 secondary school netball teams on Saturdays during 1995.⁹ This means that, on a given Saturday, up to 3255 netball players used the Hagley park complex which is no bigger than 18,600m², or the equivalent of 2.2 international size rugby pitches.¹⁰ Imagine the chaos if the Canterbury Rugby Union was required to play all its weekend matches on just two pitches!

The need to provide a game that was an efficient user of the available space has influenced the shape of the game to an enormous degree. Netball has developed a very rigorous and centralised timing methodology for games below representative level. All games at this level are of the same duration (usually forty minutes) and begin and end together. A common signal is sounded to commence play at the court complex with further signals at half-time and full-time and to restart play after half-time. Observers of this phenomenon would be impressed at the ‘Taylorist’ efficiency with which players are moved onto the playing area, play their games, and finally depart the playing area, all under the control of a central clock.[#]

[#] “Taylorist” refers to the controversial ideas of scientific management developed for industry by Frederick Taylor. These ideas involved the removal of all decision making capabilities

Basketball contrasts with the spatial efficiency of netball. Basketball games are, like netball, of forty minutes duration. However, unlike netball, whenever the ball is not in play the game clock is stopped. Whereas netball games are all a uniform total of forty minutes duration and can therefore be controlled centrally, basketball games have differing duration's and can last over two hours in total time. It is clear, therefore, that basketball facilities cannot be used as efficiently, with regard to time, as can netball facilities. A shortage of basketball courts would have a far greater retarding effect upon player numbers than would a corresponding shortage of netball courts. Similar comparisons can be drawn between netball and most sports. This fact provides an enormous competitive advantage to netball in that a large increase in players can be accommodated with only a comparatively small increase in facilities. This is a crucial advantage to netball over many other sports, particularly in urban areas.

Spatial efficiency is also a major factor behind the growth of basketball among the Afro-American population of American inner-cities. Basketball is often played on dilapidated lots in inner-city areas. This world is far removed from the glitzy, high profile, world of college and professional American leagues. However, the inner-city slums are the true breeding ground of many of the top level professional basketball players in the USA. In a marginalised population located in densely crowded and decaying inner-city slums recreation must be both spatially and economically efficient. Basketball suits these conditions admirably

from workers and the reduction of all work to basic, repetitive tasks all under the control of a central clock.

as all that is needed to play it, at this rudimentary level, is a piece of flat, hard ground, a ball, a hoop and any number of colleagues.

The rudimentary basic requirements for the game are therefore similar to those of netball. However, unlike New Zealand women, Afro-American communities have traditionally been separated from the rest of American society. Consequently, there have been few restrictions on the physical nature of the game played by the men in these slums, unlike the case for New Zealand women. For this reason the Afro-American basketball players have fashioned Naismith's game in accordance with their own criteria, rather than be forced to adapt a game to meet social expectations as was the case for New Zealand netball. Consequently, Afro-Americans have altered the style of basketball without changing the rules.

Netball developed as a cheap, outdoor, and therefore efficient, form of recreation tailored specifically for New Zealand women. A further key reason why netball was able to establish itself in New Zealand lay behind the moderate winter climate in this country. The climate of New Zealand is such that it is possible to play sports outdoors all winter. More significantly for the elite level competitions, it is also possible to practice the same sports outdoors at night under lights. As early as 1930 the CNU had access to a private, lighted, outdoor grass court for representative practice. This court was provided by Mrs Brown, an early president of the CNU, at her own cost.¹¹

As was shown in **Chapter One**, the main motivation behind Naismith inventing basketball was the need to provide an appropriate form of indoor activity during the harsh winters experienced in the eastern states of the USA. American males tended to monopolise gymnasiums for their recreation in winter

as the phenomenon of males alienating all prime recreational space was almost universal. Therefore, in common with New Zealand, the sporting opportunities of American women were limited, particularly so in winter. The harsh winters in the USA prevented the development of a suitable winter outdoor game like netball. American women, therefore, have had to compete directly with their male counterparts for access to indoor resources. Consequently, when they were able to gain access to recreational resources they tended to play similar games to their male counterparts, albeit in slightly less physical variants. For this reason basketball has had a long tradition among American women, particularly at college level. However, owing to the direct competition with their male colleagues for resources, the women's college leagues have been on a far smaller scale and have achieved far less exposure than their male counterparts.

If New Zealand winters were so harsh as to dictate the need for indoor sports, then there is no doubt that men would have pre-empted the majority of indoor space for their own use with women being relegated to the sidelines. The mild New Zealand winters meant that although netballers had access to only limited space they were not further handicapped by the need to construct expensive playing arenas. New Zealand netball as we know it would not exist today if it had needed to be played indoors from the outset. The lack of capital that has characterised the various netball associations throughout New Zealand, until recently, would have prohibited the construction of the necessary playing arenas.

A key reason why netball is so popular among women in many countries of the former British Empire such as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the

Caribbean nations, is that these colonies all had comparatively mild winters. The game has been less popular in Britain, partially due to the harsher winter climate. The European dominated countries of the old Empire (together with the Caribbean nations) have tended to have similar doctrines regarding the role of women in sport. However, the countries with the more temperate climates have all developed stronger netball traditions in comparison to Britain. The harsher treatment of women prevalent in the Asian colonies however, meant that these countries did not adopt sport for their women with the same gusto as characterised the love of cricket among their men.

As netball has gained in stature as a televised spectator sport since the 1980s, the game at the elite level has begun to move indoors. Top level netball is played in basketball stadiums which eliminate the vagaries of weather from play and provide greater comfort for spectators. It also makes it easier for organisers to exclude those who have not paid an entry fee. Netball associations have had difficulty in providing totally enclosed facilities. This means that the charging of admission has been extremely difficult in the public parks where many associations have their complexes. In Christchurch, for example, the CNU traditionally has been unable to charge admission to this public recreational space. The CNU had to gain written permission from the Christchurch City Council in order to be able to charge admission to their Hagley Park complex.¹² This fact made it extraordinarily difficult to raise revenue by charging admission to see top level competition.

By contrast, the male codes of rugby and cricket were able to reap a consistent financial windfall for their operations in New Zealand by virtue of their

ability to play top level matches in fully enclosed grounds in front of paying spectators. The lack of paying spectators meant this potentially lucrative source of income was denied to netball associations, which in turn made capital development difficult. Lack of finance ensured that available resources were utilised to maximum potential. This lack of financial resources was mitigated to an extent by the concentration and centralisation of netball in urban areas where the costs of netball could be spread more widely among the participants than in less populated rural areas.

A further bonus from the move of elite netball indoors is increased television exposure in 'prime-time' viewing slots. This phenomenon has given netball a crucial marketing advantage over much of its competition as indoor sports are able to be played in all weather and at any time. This means that live coverage of a netball international is unlikely to clash with the screening of outdoor sports, such as rugby, on Saturdays. Prime-time, live coverage has enabled netball to move away from its traditional role as a 'curtain-raiser' for supposedly more important male events. As we have seen, the first inter-provincial netball match was played on Lancaster Park in Christchurch as a 'curtain-raiser' to a rugby match.¹³ Following this precedent, the first live telecast of a netball international (New Zealand versus England) was conveniently placed in a Saturday time-slot that allowed the live coverage of a 1981 Scotland versus New Zealand rugby international to begin after the conclusion of the netball international.¹⁴

The flexibility afforded by indoor facilities has enabled netball matches to avoid clashes of scheduling with other sports. The desire to avoid such clashes is

so strong that TVNZ is now contractually obliged to “use its best endeavours to broadcast international matches played in New Zealand in the mid-evening time slot and shall give Netball NZ as much notice as shall be possible if TVNZ shall determine that such scheduling is not possible”.¹⁵ The scheduling of night, often mid-week, netball internationals ensures that netball no longer is treated as a curtain raiser to male sports but attracts its own audience. This has meant a tremendous boost in revenue due to increased fees for television broadcast rights and the associated increase in sponsorship. The increasing media profile of New Zealand netball has seen a boost in sponsorship from an initial \$2,000 in 1973, to \$11,040 in 1982 (the year after the first live telecast), to a high of \$736,014 in 1994.¹⁶

Live television coverage has had a more concrete effect on netball matches themselves. The live coverage of netball has seen the introduction of four, fifteen-minute, quarters in top level games instead of the norm of two, twenty-minute, halves. This arrangement has benefits for the players in the way of more breaks during the game during which the teams can regroup and within which the coach has the ability to substitute players. However, the imperative behind the introduction of quarters in televised netball was that it enabled the broadcaster to schedule regular, and increased, advertisement breaks in the live coverage. Furthermore, TVNZ has contractual rights with NNZ to determine to an extent what advertising is displayed within the stadium and to use netball coverage for its own publicity purposes free of charge. NNZ has the contractual obligation to “Use its best endeavours to make available to TVNZ for interview purposes any participants in the Matches at a time and place to be mutually agreed on”.¹⁷

Therefore, although the increased exposure of netball and the associated influx of financial capital has had enormous benefits upon New Zealand netball, the exposure has also influenced the shape of the game. Top level netball has gone from a Saturday afternoon outdoor sport to a prime-time, indoor, television event. The use of indoor facilities for elite level netball matches means that only the large cities with such facilities can hold top level netball matches. Furthermore, the national tournament is no longer held at one venue over a week but on a home and away basis between the participating teams in each grade. These two developments have effectively ensured that the smaller regions no longer get to see top grade netball in their areas. Top level netball is now a thoroughly urban phenomenon.

Netball has traditionally been an urban sport in New Zealand, and is becoming even more so. The four main centres were the first cities to have netball associations and indeed were the foundation members of the fledgling national association in 1924. Even in 1995, greater Auckland, Wellington/Hutt Valley, Christchurch, and Dunedin, comprised 31% of the total number of senior netball teams in New Zealand. However, netball's strongest areas of support per capita are in the lesser urban areas (cities and towns with populations between 1,000 and 30,000) as the four main cities held nearly 45% of New Zealand's population. This figure indicates that the netball playing population of New Zealand's larger cities is disproportionately small in comparison to the total population of these cities. The 1995 Official New Zealand Yearbook states that 85% of New Zealand's population lived in urban areas with 68% living in the 'main urban

areas' (towns of over 30,000 inhabitants). However, in netball terms, only 55% of netball teams are in associations in the main urban areas. Consequently, 45% of netball teams are located in the smaller towns and cities which hold only 32% of New Zealand's population.¹⁸

However, the balance has begun to shift in favour of the major urban centres since 1989 when, according to comparable statistics, 47.4% of netball teams were located in the smaller towns and cities. A comparison of membership statistics between 1995 and 1989 shows that the number of teams has risen from a total of 10,516 in 1989 to 11,728 in 1995 (see **Appendix 1**). However, if the 1731 kiwi netball teams are removed from the 1995 figure (Kiwi netball did not exist in 1989) then the 1995 total is 9997 teams, a loss of 519. Figure 4.4 demonstrates that, if kiwi netball teams are excluded, there has been a steady decrease in the number of teams affiliated to NNZ since 1983.

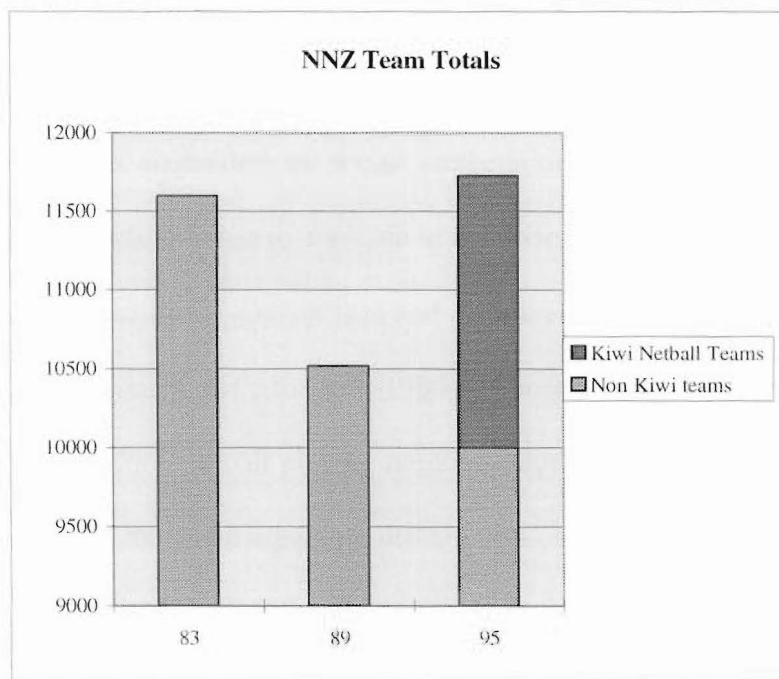


Figure 4.4

NNZ attributes the shift away from netball to a combination of factors ranging from: the emergence of new sporting opportunities for New Zealand women and girls; increasing academic pressure - particularly at tertiary level; increased weekend employment; and the changing role of women in society and the work-force.¹⁹ Netball has to compete with non-recreational activity like part-time employment as well as alternative recreational activities in order to attract participants. The increasingly hectic and flexible lifestyle of the typical New Zealander has seen a trend towards fitting recreation into a convenient time frame rather than on a weekly schedule. The popularity of commercial gymnasiums is evidence of this trend. Many New Zealanders now tend to adjust exercise and recreation according to short-term needs and convenience. The period since the 1980s has experienced growth in irregular, individual, recreational activities at the expense of organised team recreation.²⁰

As we have seen, netball was the most popular choice for New Zealand women when sporting opportunities were limited. However, the range of sports for women has expanded as social expectations of the role of women have changed. Netball now has to compete in the sporting equivalent of the free market with both its traditional competition and a number of new sports that have become available for women since the mid-1980s. Consequently, the late 1980s was also the period in which netball playing numbers began to retract. The introduction of new sports and the more equitable distribution of sporting resources along gender lines has seen the gradual erosion of the advantages that formed the basis of netball's hegemony. Social conventions no longer dictate what sport a woman may play and space is not at such a premium for women's sports. The imperative

for New Zealand sportswomen to play netball is now at an all time low. This is why NNZ is steadily losing players.

The majority of this loss in teams is from the lesser urban areas, particularly in school-age grades, down from 4847 teams in 1989 to 4345 in 1995. By contrast, the main urban areas have remained largely static, 5669 in 1989 compared to 5652 in 1995. Historically, netball has a strong tradition in schools and NNZ relies heavily upon this area for members. NNZ has targeted youth netball for development since the early 1980s in an effort to increase participation at all levels and to provide better competition for talented age group players. The extent of this development has depended upon the level of sponsorship and government funding. NNZ has introduced initiatives targeted at specific groups as funding has become available. Consequently, in 1982 the first of the Prudential sponsored age group tournaments for under 16 and under 18 players was held. These tournaments were run on a regional basis with national finals.²¹ The Health Sponsorship Council, under the Smokefree banner, assumed sponsorship of the age group championships in 1991.²²

The large sponsorship funds available to NNZ in comparison with many other sports for women mean that netball is able to provide a greater range of opportunities for youth players within which to advance. Well financed youth programmes and the high profile young internationals team are a great incentive for many young New Zealand sportswomen to pursue a career in netball. Two prominent examples are those of current silver-ferns, Belinda Colling and Donna Loffhagen. Both were senior New Zealand representatives at basketball before choosing the higher profile option of netball. Although there are many sporting

options available to young sportswomen, netball still provides the best opportunity for regular national and international competition.

However, the school-age sports market is one of ever increasing competition. The Hillary commission funds programmes to increase female participation, as players, volunteers or coaches in cricket, rugby league, rowing, cycling and squash.²³ Comparative survey data shows that the trend since the mid-1970s is for both sexes to pursue a wider variety of sports in New Zealand.²⁴ The effect of this competition for players can be seen in the declining numbers of secondary and primary school teams affiliated to NNZ, particularly in the lesser urban areas. The lack of space experienced in inner city schools has been less of a problem in the smaller towns and cities. Consequently, greater recreational space, combined with the relaxation of sporting gender boundaries, allows an ever increasing range of recreational opportunities for schoolgirls in the lesser urban areas.

The increase in recreational opportunities for schoolgirls is aided by the predominance of co-educational schools in the smaller towns and cities of New Zealand. In these schools boys are now less able to monopolise the rugby and soccer pitches for organised recreation at the expense of the girls. Space that has traditionally been allocated for the sole use of males is now tending to be shared on a more egalitarian basis. Increasing numbers of schools now enter girls' football teams in local competitions. However, in the main urban areas there is still the problem of space which works to netball's advantage, particularly in single sex schools. The relaxation of gender restrictions on recreation are meaningless if more space for new sports facilities is still not available.

Consequently, netball participation remains healthy in the larger urban areas. Furthermore, these areas are also where the majority of coaching programmes are concentrated. It is much harder for NNZ to develop consistent coaching and development programmes in thinly populated areas than in large urban centres.

NNZ realises that participation from school-age children is crucial for the game's future and accordingly targets this demographic in its greatest efforts to attract new players. The kiwi netball programme has affiliated 1731 teams of children, of both sexes, aged five to twelve to NNZ's total. It is hoped that this younger age group will remain in netball and progress through to the more senior grades. Consequently, financial investment in coaching and youth programmes accounted for 42% of NNZ's expenditure in 1994.²⁵ However, the concentration of Kiwi netball teams is again in the main urban areas, 1037 teams in the main urban areas versus 694 teams (see **Appendix 1**).

The emphasis of NNZ's recruiting and retention programme is upon the 11 to 15 years age group. Hillary Commission research has shown that many teenage girls give up netball when they get to age 15.²⁶ Consequently, NNZ has instituted a Netball Development Unit, headed by a Game Development Manager who, in turn, directs five regional netball development officers. The unit has two main objectives: increasing participation, and the development of netball at the non-elite level. The unit aims to co-ordinate players, parents, coaches, umpires, schools and unions in order to foster the development of netball.²⁷

NNZ is concerned that the increasing professionalism and competitiveness of top level netball has had a negative effect on the participation levels in netball. The current rules have effectively dictated a style of play that gives a tremendous

advantage to tall players, particularly so at the elite level. In order to counteract this bias, NNZ appointed a five person panel in 1995 to develop possible rule changes for consideration at the next IFNA meeting in 1997. One of the possibilities mooted by this panel was the introduction of a two-point goal for shots scored from outside the goal circle. At present, goals can only be scored from within this semi-circular line and count as one point. A member of the panel, ex Silver-Fern, Julie Townshend, believes that the two point goal would give “the smaller, more agile player the chance to make long shots,”²⁸ Increasing the number of players able to score goals in netball would inevitably diminish the dominance of tall players inside the goal circle. However, this dominance would only be reduced, not eliminated, by this measure. Tall players would still hold the advantage in defence and rebounding missed shots.

This proposal is yet another parallel with basketball. Netball’s two-point goal was influenced by the earlier introduction of a similar three-point rule in basketball. The desired effect of the three point field goal was twofold: to increase the scoring potential of accurate long range shooters to extend defences away from the basket to counter this threat. The latter also cleared space closer to the basket and allowed more freedom for players to ‘drive to the basket’ and to unleash crowd-pleasing moves. The three-point rule has significantly altered the style of modern basketball. The success of a player like Michael Jordan owes a lot to the serious threat posed by his accurate long range shooting team-mates. The three point threat means that if defences concentrate on Jordan they leave his outside shooters open. However, if defences stay away from the basket to

counteract the three-point threat this in turn opens lanes to the basket for Jordan to exploit.

This is exactly the desired effect of the two point goal in netball. Defences would no longer be able to concentrate on the two shooters but would also have to be aware of long range shots from players outside the shooting circle. Furthermore, accurate long range shooting would allow teams the risky possibility to make up deficits more quickly towards the end of games than is currently the case. The envisioned longer term benefits of this proposal are twofold: it would counteract the dominance of tall players (thereby enabling a greater range of players to contribute at all levels and encourage more players to stay with the game); it would, as with basketball, make the game more appealing as a spectator sport. Further to this last aim, the NNZ panel is also attempting to develop proposals for further possible changes to decrease stoppages thereby increasing the appeal of netball as entertainment.²⁹

The perceived need for rule changes is indicative of the shifting focus of netball's administrators. NNZ is focusing more on developing the game to make it more attractive to potential players and supporters. This contrasts with the original mission of netball which was to provide a socially acceptable game for New Zealand women. The need to make the game exciting for players was secondary to the need to tailor it to suit social conventions on women's sporting behaviour. Furthermore, the stimulation of possible spectators was not an issue as paying spectators are a recent phenomenon for New Zealand netball.

As the primary reason for the alteration of Naismith's basketball in order to create netball has eroded, the administrators of netball have begun to develop the

game along a similar path to that of basketball. The main aim of both netball and basketball administrators is to provide a game that is exciting and challenging for players and spectators in a non-gendered environment. It is not surprising, given that the need to make netball socially acceptable is no longer apparent, that netball administrators are now seeking to implement some of the improvements made to basketball into their own game.

NNZ is utilising its increasing media profile and financial resources in an attempt to counteract a trend towards declining participation. The traditional basis of netball's hegemony has steadily eroded since the 1980s. NNZ, however, have adopted new approaches in order to preserve its traditional dominance in New Zealand sport. No longer does netball owe its hegemony to the twin pronged advantages of social acceptability and spatial efficiency. These advantages were enough to gain hegemony for netball but now this hegemony is defended by the associated benefits of a high media profile and a correspondingly high level of state and corporate funding.

It is always easier to defend hegemony than it is to achieve it. Netball is no exception to this rule. Netball owes its comparatively high profile and level of state-funding to its earlier achievement of hegemony and now the benefits of this hegemony are utilised in its defence. Increased money and profile are used to promote the game among the target groups for participation. Furthermore, the effective relaxation of social restrictions on women's sports has enabled netball administrators to subtly restructure the game to make it more appealing to players and spectators alike. The original basis for the formation of netball's hegemony

has eroded but netball has been able to gain such a head start over its competition that it will undoubtedly maintain dominance, if not hegemony, for the foreseeable future.

¹ These figures are from the corresponding entries for the sports listed in J. Arlott, Ed, The Oxford Companion to Sports and Games, Paladin, St Albans, 1977.

² Ibid

³ These figures are from, Fry, p. 134.

⁴ AJHR, E12, 1908.

⁵ Auckland Girl's Grammar School, 75th Jubilee 1888-1963, handbook, p. 11.

⁶ AJHR, 1909, E6, CBHS Report.

⁷ Fry, p. 134.

⁸ MacDonald, *Organisations In Sport, Recreation And Leisure*, p 406.

⁹ Figures from a copy of NNZ membership statistics. NNZ Archives.

¹⁰ These figures are calculated on the basis of the information listed in **table 1**.

¹¹ CNU Minutes, 1930.

¹² Letter from Town Clerk to Secretary of the CNU. National Archives, Christchurch.

¹³ CNU Minutes, 11 July, 1924.

¹⁴ Macdonald, *Netball New Zealand, 1924-*, p. 433.

¹⁵ Television contract between NNZ and TVNZ. NNZ Archives

¹⁶ These figures are from NNZ Annual Reports for the years listed. NNZ Archives.

¹⁷ Television contract between NNZ and TVNZ. NNZ Archives.

¹⁸ All figures in this paragraph are calculated from two sources, firstly, Statistics New Zealand, Official New Zealand Yearbook, 1995, pp. 115-116, and secondly, from the copy of NNZ membership statistics for 1995. NNZ Archives.

¹⁹ This information is from personal correspondence with Alistair Snell, the Executive Director of NNZ.

²⁰ J. Watson, *The History of Leisure, Recreation and Tourism in New Zealand*, in, H. C. Perkins & G. Cushman, eds., Leisure, Recreation and Tourism, Longman Paul, Auckland, 1993, Perkins & Cushman eds., pp. 15-30, p. 25.

²¹ NNZ Annual report, March 1983.

²² Ibid, 1991.

²³ Making Sport Happen, p. 17.

²⁴ P. Lynch & C. Simpson, *Gender and Leisure*, in, Perkins & Cushman eds., pp. 58-71, p. 65.

²⁵ NNZ annual Report, 1993-1994.

²⁶ The Press, 11 December, 1996, p. 36

²⁷ Ibid, 11 December, 1996, p. 36.

²⁸ Ibid, Tuesday, 14 November, 1995.

²⁹ Ibid.

Conclusion

Does New Zealand netball constitute a female-centred culture where women exert power and influence free from male interference? The traditional answer to this question would have been affirmative. However, we have seen that the issue is a far more complex one than it seems at first glance. Asserting that women were able to develop a female-centred culture in netball is akin to claiming that prisoners in penal institutions are able to establish an inmate-centred culture. The inmates may well develop their own culture, but only within externally imposed limits. Similarly, a dominantly patriarchal society succeeded in determining the shape and nature of netball in New Zealand.

The development of netball in New Zealand is inextricably linked to the changing roles of women in society. It is a mistake to attempt to analyse a sport without placing it inside its wider social context. Netball in this instance is certainly no exception. Netball is possibly more illustrative of a wider social context than any other sport as the game is itself a social construction. A derivative of a game invented by Dr James Naismith in America in 1891, Netball was deliberately, and scientifically, altered to meet social preconceptions about what was a suitable sport for contemporary women. In this respect the game of netball is quite possibly unique. Other games traditionally have undergone

informal developmental periods before they are codified and uniform sets of rules are developed. Basketball was invented to a formula developed by Naismith and codified before anyone had played it. Netball was a by-product of Naismith's formula, but with the addition of gender stratification into the equation.

Early netball exponents ensured that Naismith's game was de-powered in order to be less physically demanding for women. The court was divided into thirds and offside rules introduced in order to prevent the players from having to cover the entire court. All possibility of physical contact between players was legislated against. Restrictions were placed on how close defenders could be to the player with the ball and any attempt to remove the ball from the possession of an opponent was prohibited. These rules remain central to modern netball. Basketball, however, has developed markedly from Naismith's original. The difference has been that basketball has never had to conform to social restrictions on its nature. Netball has had its development as a game retarded by the need to be appropriately feminine.

If femininity is a social construction then netball is an element of this construction. The examination of the imperative for altering Naismith's game to create netball reveals the nature of contemporary thought towards women's role in society. Medical/scientific opinion had dictated that women were suited best for the dual role of mother and homemaker. Women's bodies were supposedly too weak and too prone to sickness to be able to stand the stresses of work, academic study and sport. The theory expostulated that, unlike men, women only had a limited amount of energy or 'vital force'. If this energy was wasted on activities other than child rearing and the maintenance of a good home then these

two key roles would inevitably suffer as a result. Sport and strenuous physical exercise was a waste of this vital force and therefore should be avoided.

Physicians did eventually come to the conclusion that exercise, on a limited scale, was in fact beneficial to women. However, the retardation of sporting opportunities for women was well advanced by the time of this change of opinion. The ideology of separate sphere's for men and women was strongly established in sports and would remain so. Even though medical and scientific opinion began to advocate physical exercise for women as beneficial for women this change had no effect on the gender barriers in sport. The change that did occur was that women were encourage to play sport for health benefits, but only in a gender appropriate fashion.

Netball was able to achieve a tremendous growth in popularity as it was considered the most appropriate team sport for women. Furthermore, the administrators of netball realised that this image of appropriateness was the key to their success and they ensured that this image was maintained, even at the expense of the players' enjoyment of the game. NNZ has consistently maintained a strict behavioural and dress code in order to protect its public image. Netball, therefore, was a gendered sporting construction in response to a gendered social construction. Without the ideology of separate sphere's for men and women there would have been no need to alter the game of basketball to meet the different, but artificially constructed, needs of women. So successful was netball at adapting to the prevailing conditions, it could be said that much of its success occurred precisely because New Zealand sports were gender divided for so long. It was a

division of which eliminated much of the opposition to netball's efforts to become the dominant sport for women.

This examination of the rise of netball in New Zealand has revolved around the concept of hegemony. Cultural-hegemony theory holds that cultural interactions are far more complex than the domination of the completely powerless by the totally powerful. There will always be those who accept domination as there will always be those who are reluctant to dominate the weak. Gender relations in sport are no exception to this rule. Some men have always resisted the subjugation of women in sport just as there has always been some women who support the domination of men. The basic premise of this thesis is that netball administrators were an example of the latter group. The administrators of netball have tacitly supported the domination of sport by men because this has effectively allowed them to gain hegemony over women's sports.

The concept of sporting hegemony is crucial to this thesis in two ways. It aids, firstly, the examination of the incomplete male dominance of sports, and secondly, the near domination of women's sports in New Zealand by netball. Patriarchal society was unable to prevent women from competing in sports. However, it was able to control women's sports by setting the criteria for social acceptability. The patriarchy was successful in demarcating sport along gender lines and thereby effectively confining women to the margins of sport. Women have only recently begun to compete in sports that had traditionally been viewed as the province of men. It is only in the last twenty years that women have gradually begun to play rugby and rugby league. Women were able to play more gender neutral sports like hockey and golf but, as these sports are played by men

also, women have always had to compete directly with men for the same resources. Any such competition inevitably favoured men. Netball associations never had to compete directly for resources with their male colleagues as, until recently, netball was not played by men.

Sporting resources in New Zealand had traditionally been allocated according to male criteria, that is until the foundation of the Hillary Commission and its non-sexist charter. This is true both through the allocation of state funding and through corporate sponsorships. Although the majority of such finance went to male sports organisations, netball had been able to gain a significant share of the minority diverted to women's sports. Netball was able to achieve this through careful tailoring of the game to conform to social expectations in order to maintain its own hegemony over women's sports. Furthermore, because netball was also able to use these same resources far more efficiently than its competition, it was able to achieve a far greater rate of growth than was possible for any other women's sport.

The small space needed for netball courts enabled the game to become established in girls' schools, which were notoriously under endowed with recreational space. Furthermore, the actual playing surface required the minimum of preparation. Netball was initially played on grass but asphalt became the standard surface in the inter-war period. Once the capital needed for asphalt courts was raised there was little maintenance work needed. Furthermore, the small size of netball courts meant that a central complex could be built that catered for all netball players in even the largest New Zealand cities. This spatial efficiency, when combined with netball's social acceptance, provided a crucial

advantage for netball over rival games and enabled netball to rapidly outgrow all other women's sports in New Zealand.

Even though netball did itself achieve hegemony over women's sports in New Zealand this hegemony was, again, incomplete. The basis of netball's hegemony over women's sports in New Zealand was founded, in turn, on the hegemony of men over sport in general. Netball was able to adapt to this male dominance and alter itself in order to reap the greatest benefit from it. Patriarchal society was able to control women's sports organisations because it succeeded in setting the criteria for social acceptance of women's sports. Women's sports organisations inevitably struggled to survive without the acceptance of wider society. Early attempts at crossing the gender boundary in sports were generally suppressed. The public outrage which an attempt to form and promote a women's rugby team attracted in 1891 was, for example, sufficient to force its abandonment.ⁱ

New Zealand netball was able to adapt itself to patriarchal domination more successfully than its competition in two key ways: it conformed to the conventional ideology which governed the role of women in both sport and society; its administrators adapted the game to take advantage of an environment that severely limited sporting resources for women. By so doing they provided the basis for netball's prolonged domination of the New Zealand women's sporting scene.

Since the late 1960s netball's hegemony has been gradually eroded. Sport has followed New Zealand society in becoming less gender stratified. The easing of socially imposed gender restrictions on sport initially had a beneficial effect on

netball participation. As more women found they had opportunities to participate in sport after marriage they tended to return to the games of their youth. Netball was, therefore, able to recapture many of the players who had left the game upon marriage and the increase in family commitments. And, as we saw in **Chapter Two**, netball participation rates rose dramatically during the period between 1970 and 1989.

Netball has begun to suffer declining numbers as greater numbers of sports have become fully gender integrated. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent among young, school-age women. There is an unprecedented variety of sports now available and younger women are enthusiastically taking up sports, like rugby, from which they had previously been excluded. Netball now faces unprecedented competition to its position of hegemony. NNZ has been able to use the increased state-funding and corporate sponsorships, that are the benefits of a high profile and a large membership, in an effort to defend its position of hegemony. Programmes aimed at gaining increased participation among children and young people of both sexes are financed by the unprecedented level of financial capital now available to NNZ. Furthermore, this capital has enabled the Silver-Ferns to maintain a high profile with regular tours overseas and frequent visits to New Zealand by international teams. An analysis of the membership figures indicates that, although netball's numbers are slowly declining, the game remains the dominant sport for women in New Zealand. New Zealand netball demonstrated the fact that it is far easier to defend hegemony than it is to achieve it.

Netball's hegemony came at the expense of freedom of action in determining how the game would be played. Netball administrators always had to be careful to maintain the game's acceptability in order to maintain its dominant position. Netball was able to develop a female centred culture, but in no way was it free from male interference and control. Patriarchal society defined netball's boundaries. Netball administrators had a simple choice, either submit to patriarchal dominance and be successful within its limits, or attempt to combat male dominance of sport and be totally marginalised. In retrospect this choice was no choice at all.

ⁱ S. Crawford, *'One's Nerves and Courage are in Very Different Order out in New Zealand': Recreational and Sporting Opportunities for Women in a Remote Colonial Setting*, in Mangan & Park, eds., pp. 161-181, p. 169.

Appendix 1

Non Urban 1995	Senior	Secondary	Primary	Kiwi	Non Urban 1989	Senior	Secondary	Primary
North Otago	32	53	24		0 North Otago	26	55	16
Temuka	15	9	9		Mackenzie	5	4	0
Waimate	14	15	13		0 Temuka	21	9	16
Kawerau	5	2	16		0 Waimate	21	12	19
Opotiki	10	4	38		0 Kawerau	8	9	30
Whakatane	21	21	50	19	0 Opotiki	12	8	30
Kati Kati	4	9	6	6	Whakatane	19	13	30
Te Puke	23	13	14	26	Kati Kati	5	9	8
Buller	19	12	0	0	Mt. Maunganui	9	9	22
Hokitika	9	8	8	11	Te Puke	20	13	33
West Coast	34	23	8	8	0 Buller	15	11	0
Banks Peninsula	2	2	6	6	Hokitika	14	15	6
Hurunui	15	7	18	0	West Coast	33	18	12
Kaikoura	10	5	5	4	Banks Peninsula	5	0	4
Lincoln	27	29	30	12	Hurunui	7	14	14
Malvern	11	5	8	3	Kaikoura	4	6	11
North Canterbury	48	41	40	18	Lincoln	22	25	28
Foxton	11	8	12	0	Malvern	8	6	5
Horowhenua	28	20	29	0	North Canterbury	43	42	36
Rangitikei	21	24	24	12	Foxton	15	12	17
Taihape	10	5	16	5	Horowhenua	21	28	11
Te Kowau	6	1	9	6	Rangitikei	17	29	24
Manurewa	48	9	75	0	Taihape	10	6	10
Pukekohe	38	32	43	14	Te Kowau	12	0	16
Waikuku	19	22	30	10	Manurewa	72	22	54
Kapiti	24	42	44	15	Pukekohe	33	31	49
Kapi Mana	58	41	30	0	Waikuku	14	16	28
Central Hawkes Bay	20	15	2	0	Kapiti	19	34	34
Dannevirke	17	8	16	0	Kapi Mana	64	47	23
Marlborough	60	45	70	26	Central Hawkes Bay	23	16	44
Ashburton	33	41	34	23	Dannevirke	22	12	0
Ellesmere	7	8	12	1	Marlborough	44	48	41
Geraldine	8	8	5	4	Ashburton	45	41	59
Putaruru	12	10	7	20	Ellesmere	8	10	9
Tokoroa	25	16	16	33	Geraldine	7	7	11
Turangi	3	4	14	0	Putaruru	10	9	29
Golden Bay	10	7	5	0	Tokoroa	29	24	52
Motueka	22	12	14	0	Turangi	11	6	0
Hibiscus Coast	30	24	24	31	Golden Bay	7	6	0
Bay of Islands	21	10	31	0	Motueka	18	14	23
Hokianga	5	0	11	0	Hibiscus Coast	18	20	36
Kawakawa	12	5	24	0	Bay of Islands	19	11	26
Kerikeri	15	12	26	0	Hokianga	6	0	8
Mangonui	20	7	43	0	Kawakawa	15	10	22
Northern Wairoa	23	13	40	0	Kerikeri			
Central Otago	22	23	14	16	Mangonui	16	16	33
Milton	10	8	6	9	Northern Wairoa	19	18	34
South Otago	32	21	18	14	Central Otago	21	19	20
Upper Clutha	7	8	0	6	Milton	8	10	18
Wakatipu	13	12	0	10	South Otago	35	30	35
West Otago	6	5	4	4	Upper Clutha	6	4	10
Cambridge	36	19	24	40	Wakatipu	7	5	12
Huntly	18	5	32	0	West Otago	8	5	3
Maniapoto	18	11	20	15	Cambridge	27	53	59
Otorohanga	12	9	16	13	Huntly	27	16	30
Taumarunui	19	9	26	12	Maniapoto	17	15	20
Waipa	35	32	42	26	Otorohanga	6	8	22
Central Southland	17	18	22	0	Taumarunui	17	12	32
Eastern Southland	37	20	16	0	Waipa	20	24	39
Menzies	5	6	6	0	Central Southland	19	13	24
Southern Southland	9	0	3	0	Eastern Southland	34	28	19
Western Southland	9	12	12	0	Menzies	16	5	9
Ruatoria	7	3	0	14	Northern Southland	8	9	2
Wairoa	17	12	22	8	Southern Southland	8	5	7
Hawera	34	19	17	26	Western Southland	12	17	15
Inglewood	15	10	8	17	Matakoia	5	1	0
Opunake	13	9	10	13	Ruatoria	6	2	0
					Tokomaru Bay	9	0	0
					Tolaga Bay	6	0	0
					Wairoa	15	9	26
					Coastal Taranaki	15	18	24
					Inglewood	23	12	18
					Southern Taranaki	31	19	31

Stratford	23	19	18	17	Stratford	43	18	34
Waitara	15	6	8	20	Waitara	18	12	16
Hauraki Plains	11	10	24	0	Hauraki Plains	15	15	24
Matamata	18	44	28	0	Matamata	18	28	38
Morrinsville	18	16	13	19	Morrinsville	10	20	26
Paeroa	7	8	23	0	Paeroa	11	8	21
Thames	14	7	7	12	Thames	6	12	15
Waihi	7	10	11	13	Waihi	8	13	18
Te Aroha	13	8	23	8	Te Aroha	10	8	21
Wairarapa	32	66	67	37	North Wairarapa	13	49	56
					South Wairarapa	18	15	22
Waimarino	10	4	4	0	Waimarino	11	2	7
West Harbour	0	0	23	6				
Western Districts	58	13	68	12	Western Districts	100	54	119
	1522	1189	1634	694		1578	1364	1905
	TOTAL	5039			Total	4847		
	less kiwi	4345						
Cities 1995	Senior	Secondary	Primary	Kiwi	Cities 1989	Senior	Secondary	Primary
Whangarei	45	37	48	58	Whangarei	44	42	88
North Harbour	120	199	116	102	North Harbour	128	151	184
Rodney	29	21	30	10	Rodney	23	24	36
Gisborne	70	30	43	48	Gisborne	52	50	34
Waitakere	104	94	152	60	Henderson/Waiitemata	73	62	68
Auckland	191	298	60	50	Auckland	192	192	52
Manukau	122	60	157	29	Manukau	111	89	157
Papakura	40	25	51	13	Papakura	41	23	49
Harbourside	34	53	62	77	Tauranga	32	31	73
Hamilton	108	156	0	165	Hamilton	67	133	123
Taupo	15	10	16	27	Taupo	18	14	42
Rotorua	84	20	120	0	Rotorua	83	35	69
Hastings	76	86	3	0	Hastings	54	74	5
Napier	48	77	47	0	Napier	53	77	42
Palmerston North	139	120	66	66	Palmerston North	119	120	56
New Plymouth	49	59	43	68	New Plymouth	72	54	71
Wanganui	54	54	48	74	Wanganui	67	49	84
Hutt Valley	98	20	71	0	Hutt Valley	129	118	48
Wellington	124	107	11	0	Wellington	184	101	5
Nelson	67	63	83	0	Nelson	56	57	21
Christchurch	256	209	118	120	Christchurch	276	220	87
Timaru	49	67	54	0	Timaru	61	53	46
Dunedin	100	134	55	0	Dunedin	167	119	36
Invercargill	64	61	52	70	Invercargill	79	81	43
	2086	2060	1506	1037		2181	1969	1519
Total Urban	6689				Total Urban	5669		
less kiwi	5652							
	Sen	Sec	Pri	Kiwi		Sen	Sec	Pri
Total Urban & Rural	3608	3249	3140	1731	Total Urban & Rural	3759	3333	3424
1995 Total	11728				1989 Total	10516		
less kiwi	9997							

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